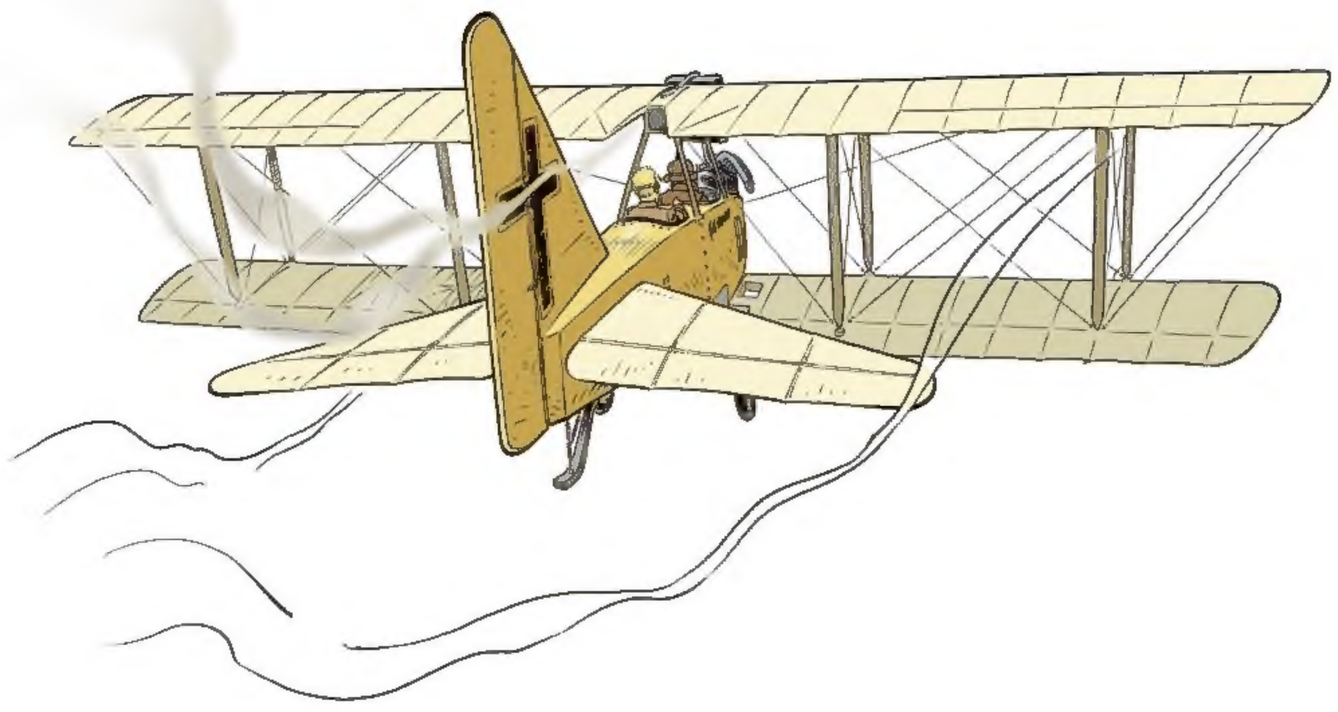
KRAEHN · ARNOUX · MILLIEN

THE AVIATOR

1. Take-off



THE AVIATOR

1. Take-off

WRITER
JEAN-CHARLES KRAEHN

ARTISTS
ERIK ARNOUX & CHRYS MILLIEN

COLORIST
PATRICIA JAMBERS

EUROPE COMICS

PREFACE

In volume nine of the series *Tramp*, artist Patrick Jusseaume and I introduced Tanguy-la-vie-dure* ("Hard Knock" Tanguy), a French pilot taking part in the First Indochina War. My instructions to Patrick were to show a character marked by life's hardships. Like all those who flew in the Gulf of Tonkin during the war in nearly suicidal conditions, he had his cracks. The kinds of cracks you might find in an old hovel: deep, broad, and beyond repair.

With a few deft strokes, Patrick brought this character to life over two pages. Apparently, it was enough to make a mark, because a few years later, Philippe Ostermann, our editor at Dargaud, brought him up again. "That guy must have lived an incredible life," he said. "Why not tell his story?"

That was all that was needed to give new life to our seasoned pilot. Well, that and a new narrative arc, as well as the talent and enthusiasm of two artists and a colorist!

Here's hoping, dear readers, that you'll enjoy the ride with Josef "Hard Knock" Tanguy.

Jean-Charles Kraehn

* Unapologetic wordplay on the legendary aviation adventure series *Tanguy et Laverdure*, by J.-M. Charlier and A. Uderzo.

IT'S COMPLETELY IMPENETRABLE. SURELY WE CAN'T TAKE OFF WITHOUT A GONIOMETER? (1)

I THOUGHT YOU WANTED TO GET BACK TO SAIGON FAST, HA TU? THIS FOG COULD LAST DAYS...

TONKIN, VIETNAM, 1952. NASSAN AIRFIELD, SOUTH OF SON LA.

BUT WITH ALL THESE MOUNTAINS... ISN'T IT DANGEROUS?!

A LOT SAFER THAN LANDING!

THAT'S TRUE.

THE RUNWAY LINES UP WITH THAT GAP IN THE HILLS. ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS STAY ON COURSE.

STAY ON COURSE, HE SAYS! YEAH, RIGHT! HAIL MARY, FULL OF GRACE...

(1) A RADIO TRACKING DEVICE ALLOWING A PLANE TO BE PILOTED FROM THE GROUND. NASSAN AIRFIELD DIDN'T HAVE ONE AT THE TIME.

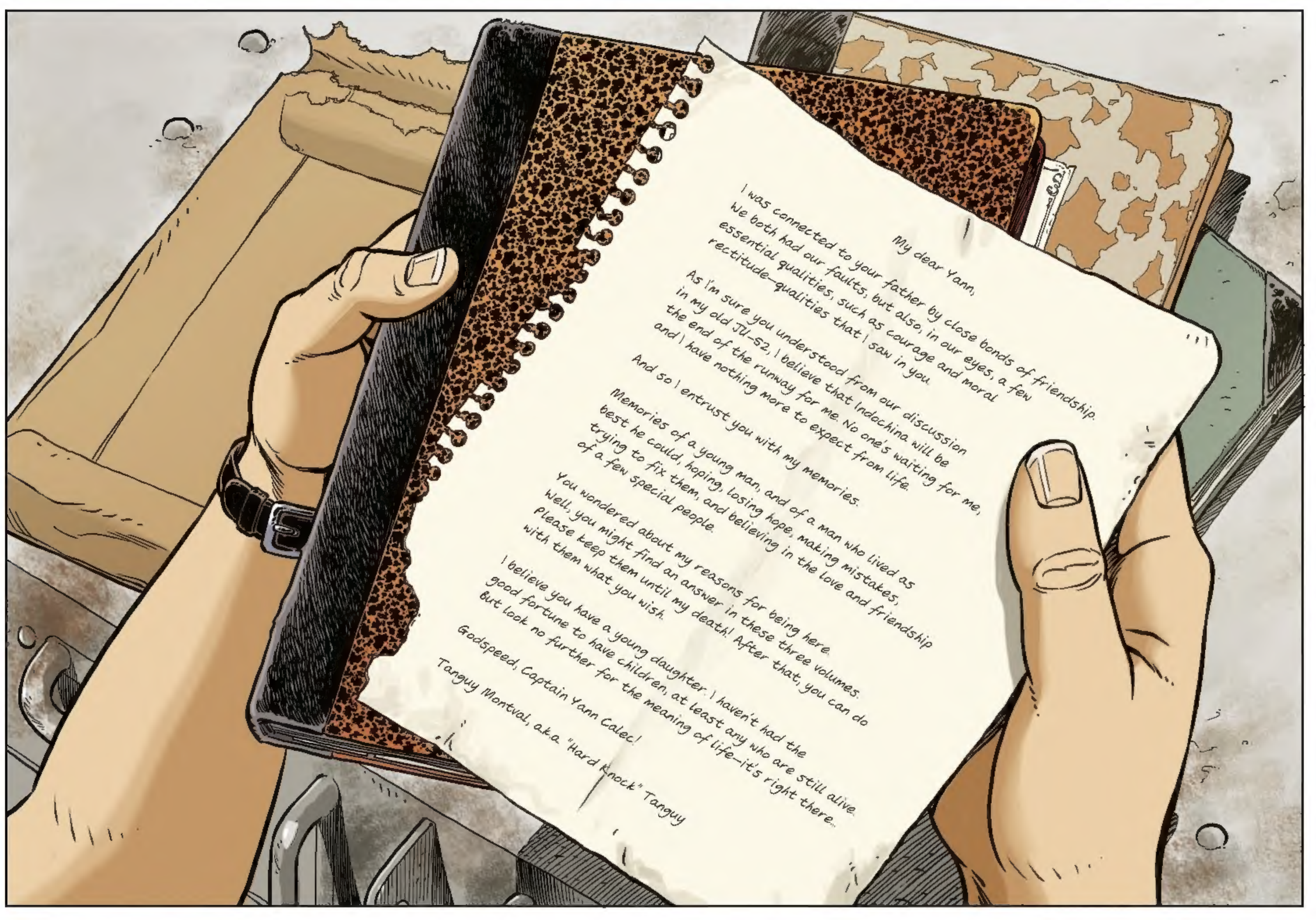
(2) SEE VOLUMES 7, 8, AND 9 OF *TRAMP*.

MY GOD! I SOMETIMES WONDER IF ANY OF IT MAKES SENSE!
HEY, DON'T START THAT! HAVE A SLUG OF HOOCH.
THAT KIND OF THINKING WILL DRIVE YOU CRAZY, YANN.
I'VE STOPPED WONDERING. I'VE SEEN AND BEEN THROUGH TOO MUCH!
SO THEY CALL YOU "HARD KNOCK"...
HOW OLD ARE YOU, TANGUY?
GUESS YOU'RE WONDERING WHY THE HELL I'M HERE, HUH?
YOU'RE RIGHT. YOU GOTTA BE NUTS TO WANNA FLY INTO TONKIN RIGHT NOW.
ONE OF OUR GUYS IS ALWAYS SMASHING INTO A MOUNTAIN SOMEWHERE. OFTEN A GOOD PAL.
SO YOU JUST GET BLITZED AND REMEMBER THE GOOD TIMES YOU HAD TOGETHER!
I GUESS I'LL END UP DOING THE SAME, BUT FOR NOW I'M STILL HERE...
...LIKE ALL THE REST!
A FEW WEEKS LATER, ABOARD THE THABOR. CAPTAIN YANN CALEC IS PREPARING FOR HIS LAST TOUR OF DUTY BEFORE RETURNING HOME...

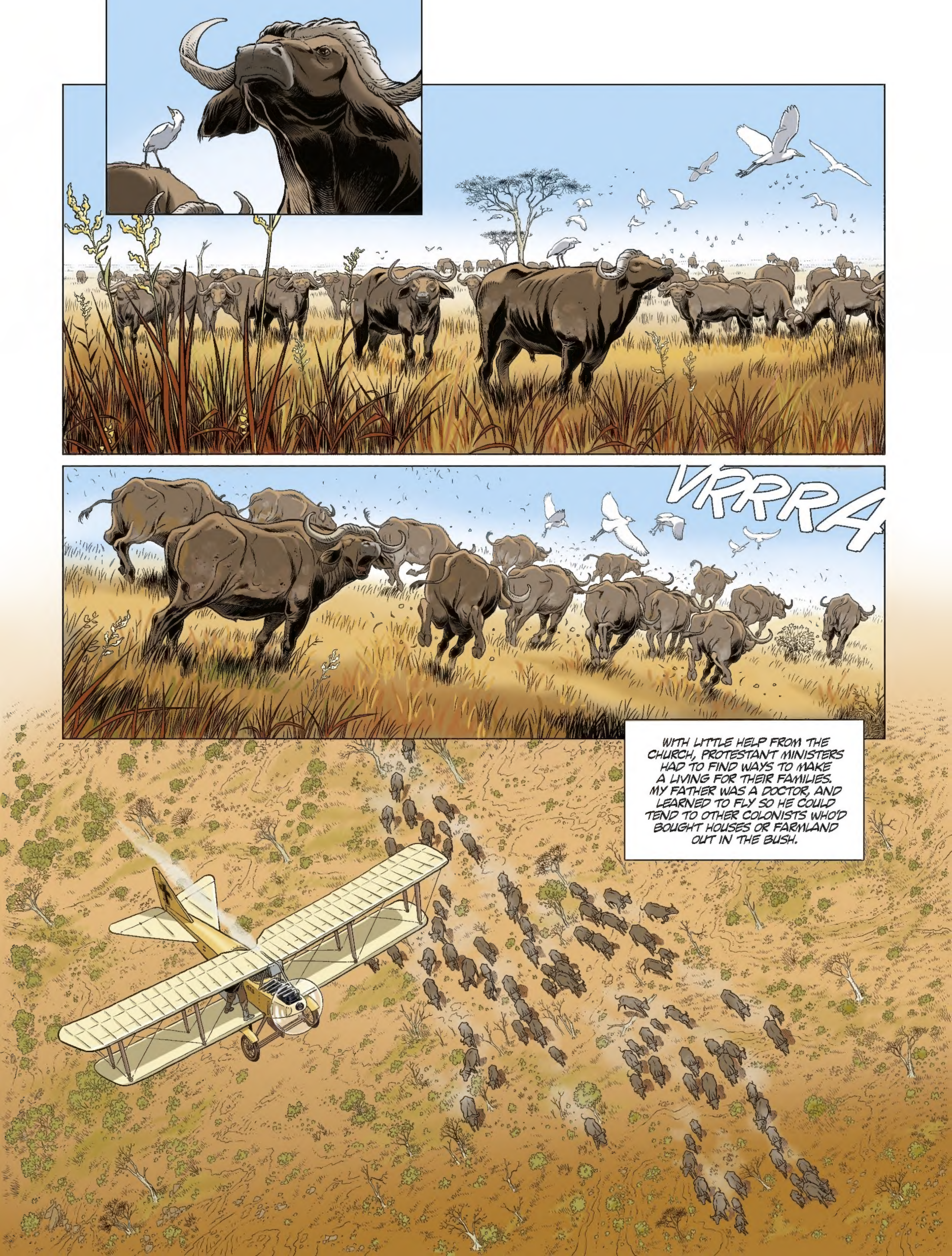
THIS PACKAGE WAS JUST DELIVERED FOR YOU, SIR.
FOR ME? THANK YOU, HY.

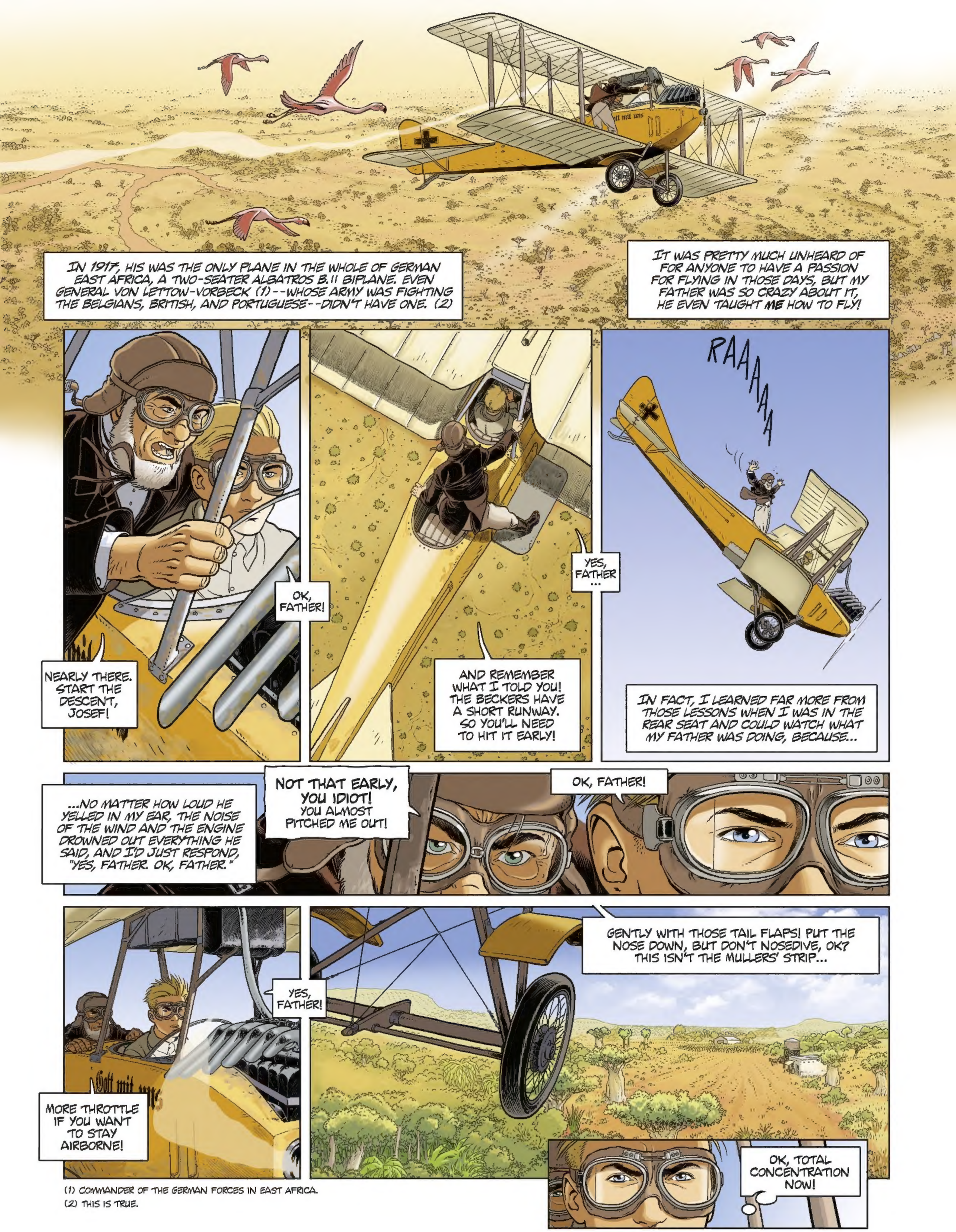
?

...

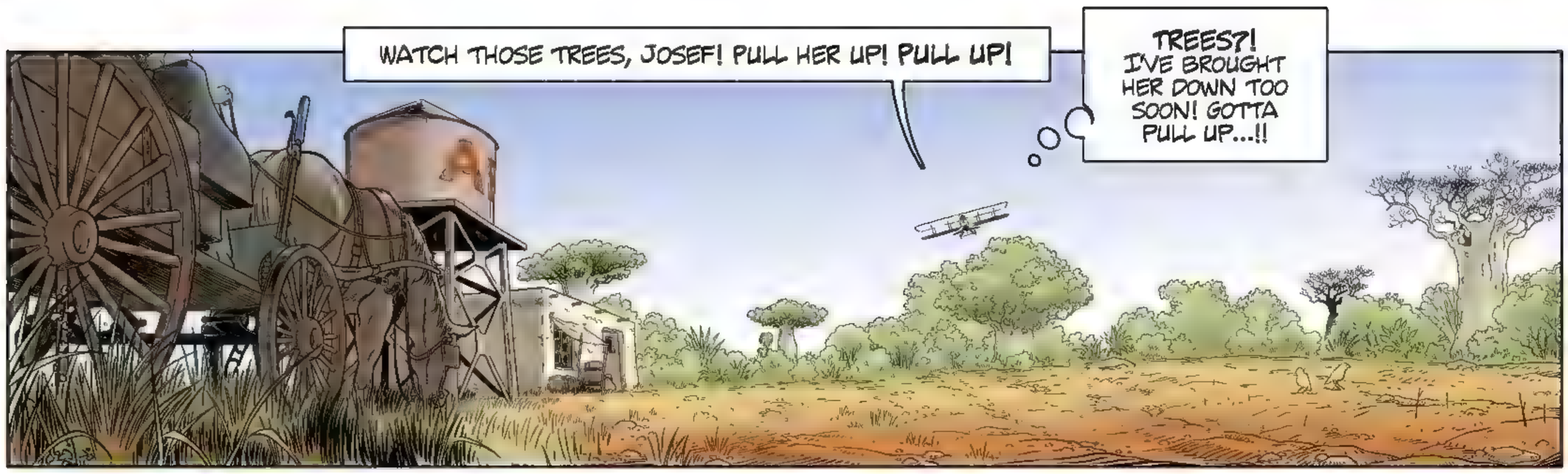

My dear Yann,
I was connected to your father by close bonds of friendship.
We both had our faults, but also, in our eyes, a few
essential qualities, such as courage and moral
rectitude—qualities that I saw in you.
As I'm sure you understood from our discussion
in my old JU-52, I believe that Indochina will be
the end of the runway for me. No one's waiting for me,
and I have nothing more to expect from life.
And so I entrust you with my memories.
Memories of a young man, and of a man who lived as
best he could, hoping, losing hope, making mistakes,
trying to fix them, and believing in the love and friendship
of a few special people.
You wondered about my reasons for being here.
Well, you might find an answer in these three volumes.
Please keep them until my death! After that, you can do
with them what you wish.
I believe you have a young daughter. I haven't had the
good fortune to have children, at least any who are still alive.
But look no further for the meaning of life—it's right there...
Godspeed, Captain Yann Calec!
Tanguy Montval, a.k.a. "Hard Knock" Tanguy

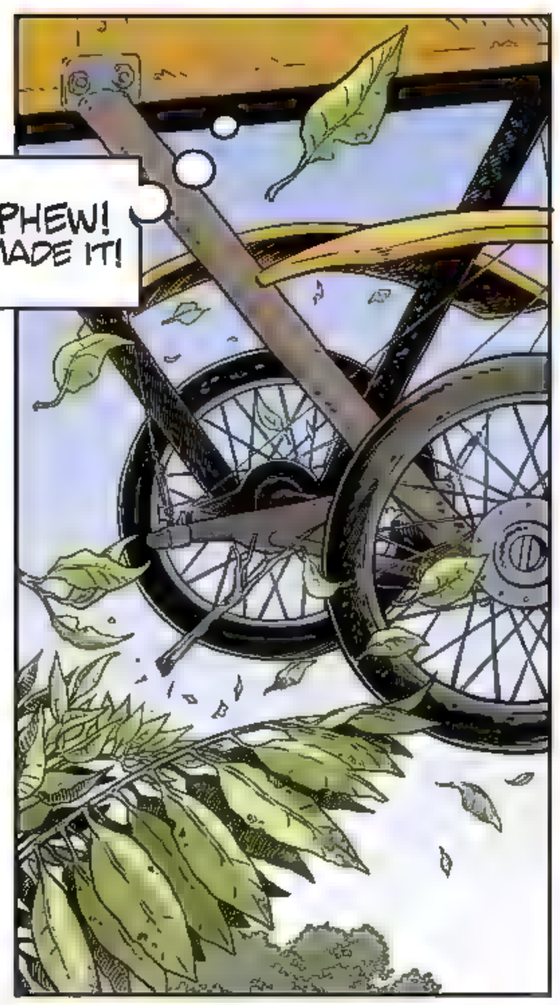
(1) LATER TO BECOME TANGANYIKA; NOW THE MAINLAND AREA OF TANZANIA.

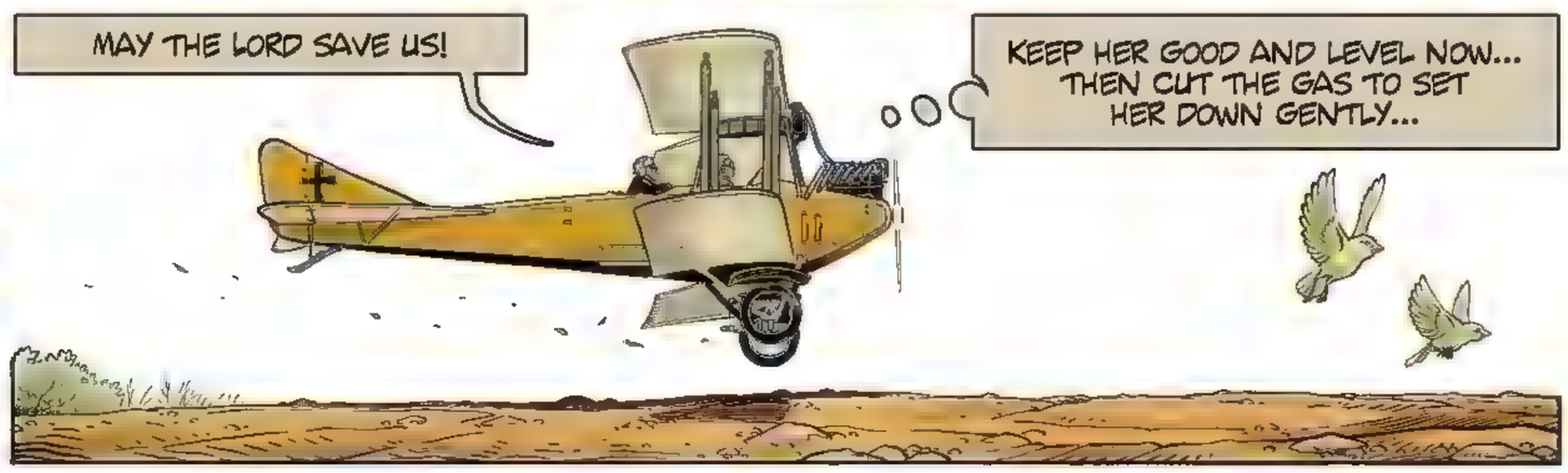

VRRRA
WITH LITTLE HELP FROM THE CHURCH, PROTESTANT MINISTERS HAD TO FIND WAYS TO MAKE A LIVING FOR THEIR FAMILIES. MY FATHER WAS A DOCTOR, AND LEARNED TO FLY SO HE COULD TEND TO OTHER COLONISTS WHO'D BOUGHT HOUSES OR FARMLAND OUT IN THE BUSH.

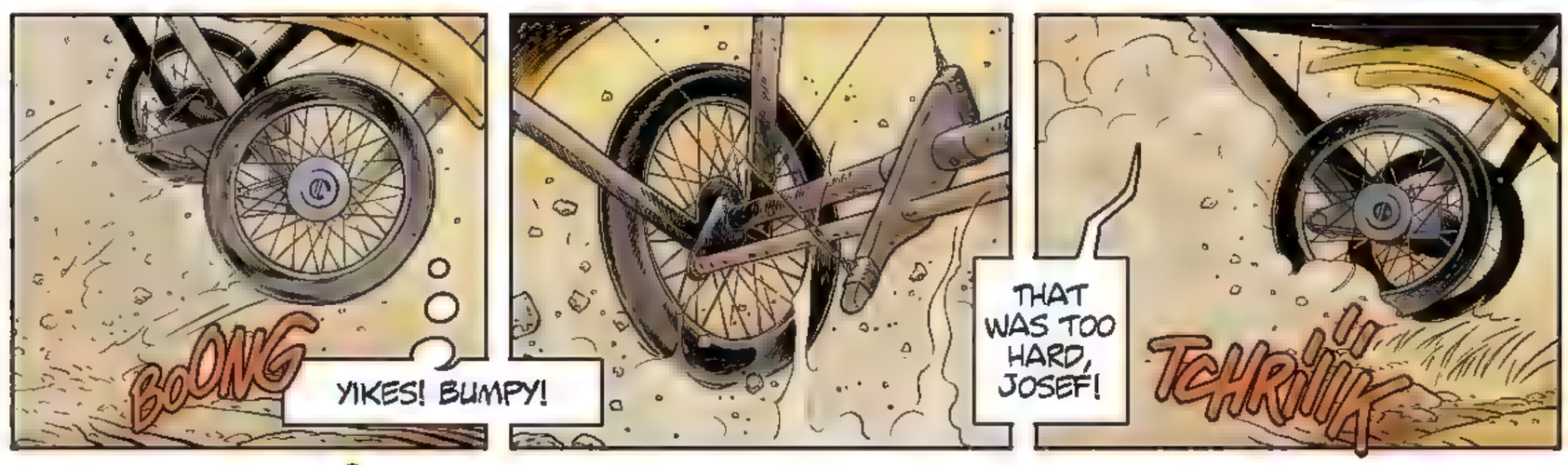


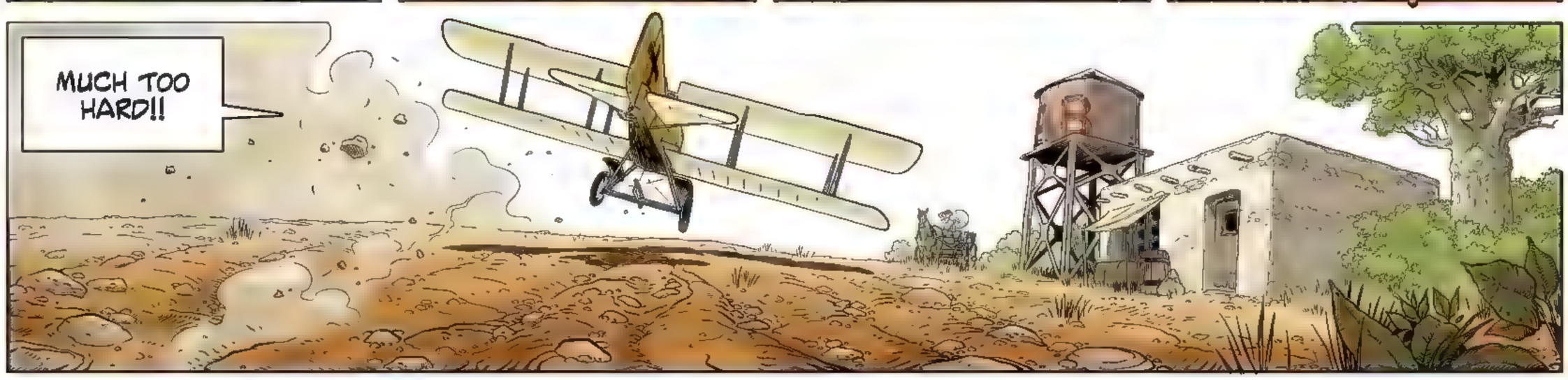
(1) COMMANDER OF THE GERMAN FORCES IN EAST AFRICA.
(2) THIS IS TRUE.

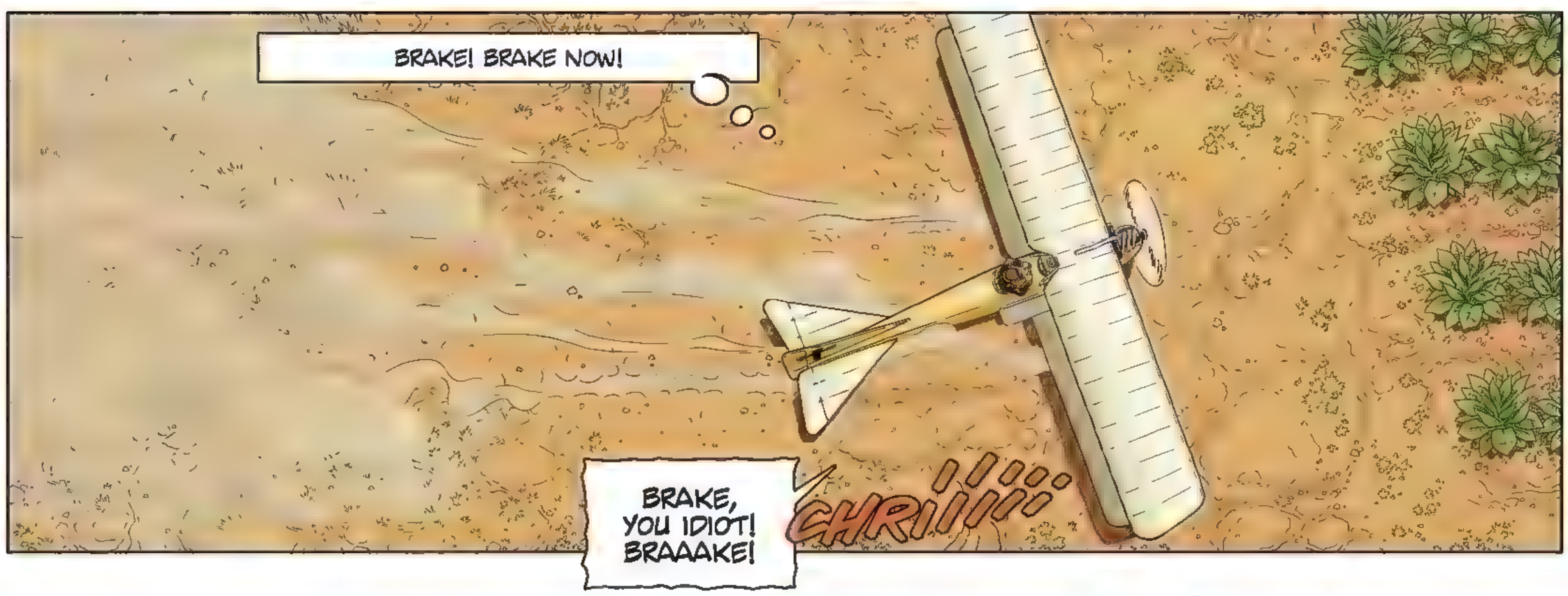

WATCH THOSE TREES, JOSEF! PULL HER UP! PULL UP!
TREES?! I'VE BROUGHT HER DOWN TOO SOON! GOTTA PULL UP...!!


PHEW! MADE IT!


MAY THE LORD SAVE US!
KEEP HER GOOD AND LEVEL NOW... THEN CUT THE GAS TO SET HER DOWN GENTLY...


BOONG
YIKES! BUMPY!
THAT WAS TOO HARD, JOSEF!
TCHRIIIK


MUCH TOO HARD!!


BRAKE! BRAKE NOW!
BRAKE, YOU IDIOT! BRAAAKE!
CHRIIIIIII

PHEW! THAT WAS CLOSE!

SLAMMING ON THE BRAKES WITH ALL MY FORCE, I STOPPED THE "GOTT MIT UNS" (1) INCHES BEFORE PLOWING INTO THE BECKERS' TOBACCO PLANTATION! I'D JUST PULLED OFF THE FIRST TRICKY LANDING OF MY LONG FLYING CAREER.

I DIDN'T KNOW IT AT THE TIME, BUT THAT DAY WAS DESTINED TO BE THE START OF A STRING OF FIRSTS IN MY LIFE.

I WON'T SAY WELL DONE, JOSEF.

YOU COULD HAVE BROKEN THE FRONT AXLE!

ARE YOU LISTENING?

OF COURSE, FATHER! THE FRONT AXLE.

JOSEF, WAS IT YOU AT THE CONTROLS OF THAT INFERNAL FLYING MACHINE?

YES, MRS. BECKER!

LIKE A HERO FROM GREEK MYTH, STREAKING ACROSS THE SKY. DON'T YOU THINK?

THERE'S NOTHING HEROIC ABOUT IT, MRS. BECKER. THE PLANE RIDES ON AIR, LIKE A BIRD. IT SIMPLY OBEYS THE LAWS OF PHYSICS.

BUT I ALSO KNOW HOW THE ENGINE WORKS, AND MOSTLY HOW TO TAKE IT APART...

I'M VERY IMPRESSED, JOSEF!

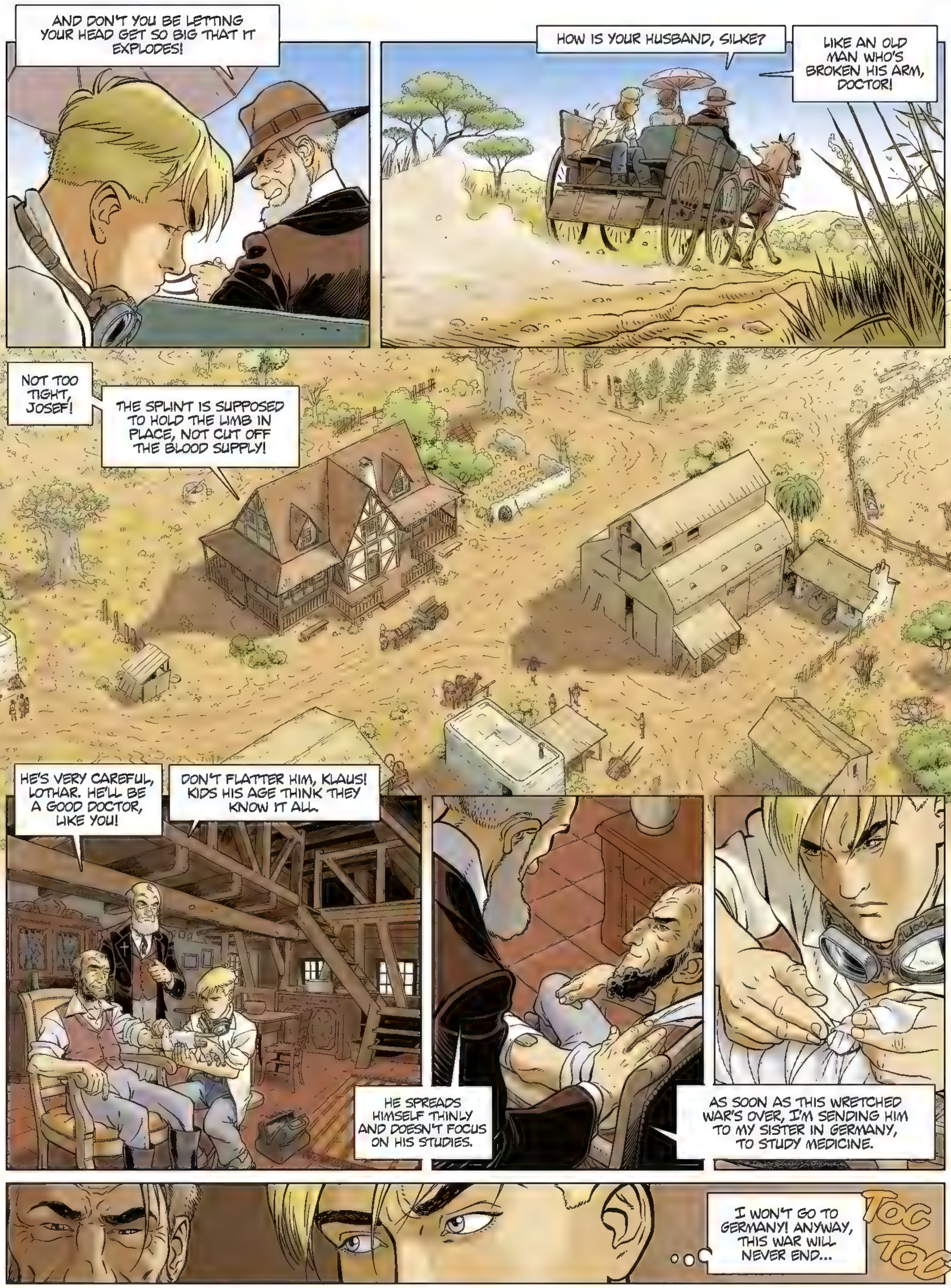
PLEASE, CALL ME SILKE. YOU MAY NOT BE A HERO YET, BUT YOU'VE CERTAINLY BECOME A MAN SINCE THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU.

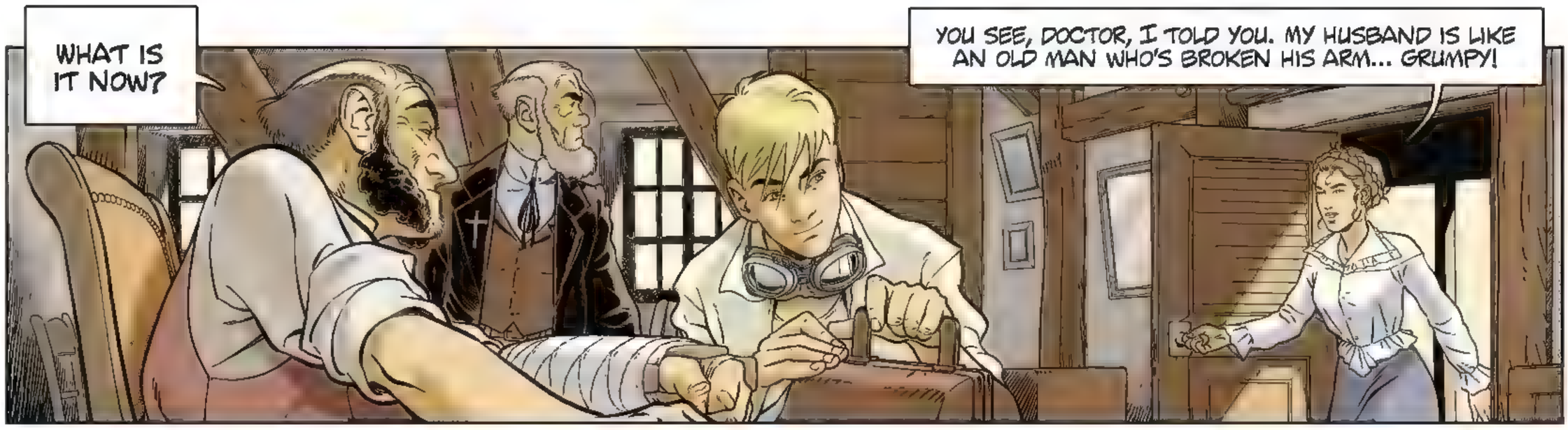
?

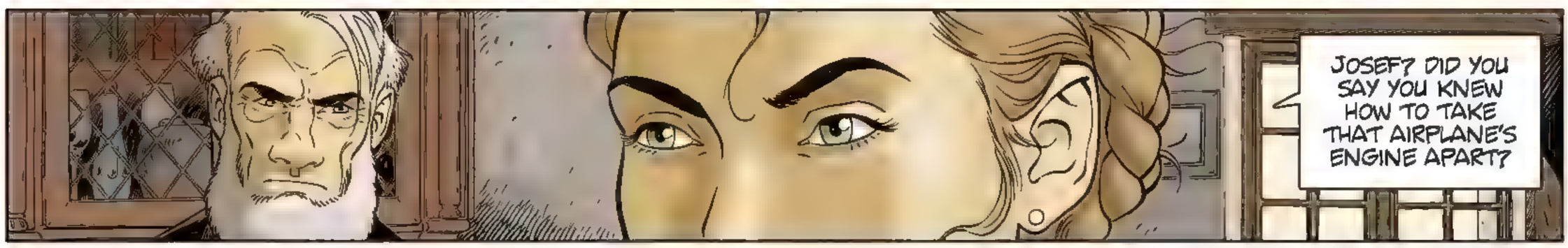
HE'S STILL A BOY, MY DEAR. AND HE WILL CONTINUE TO ADDRESS YOU AS MRS. BECKER!

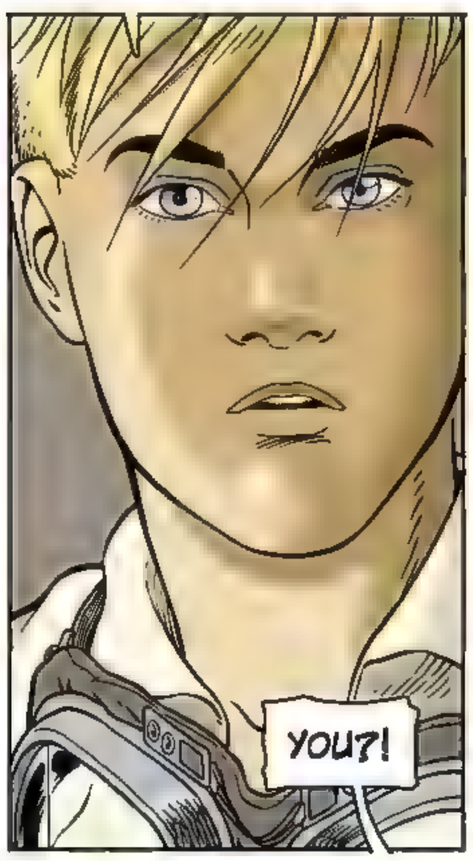
IF YOU SAY SO, PASTOR.

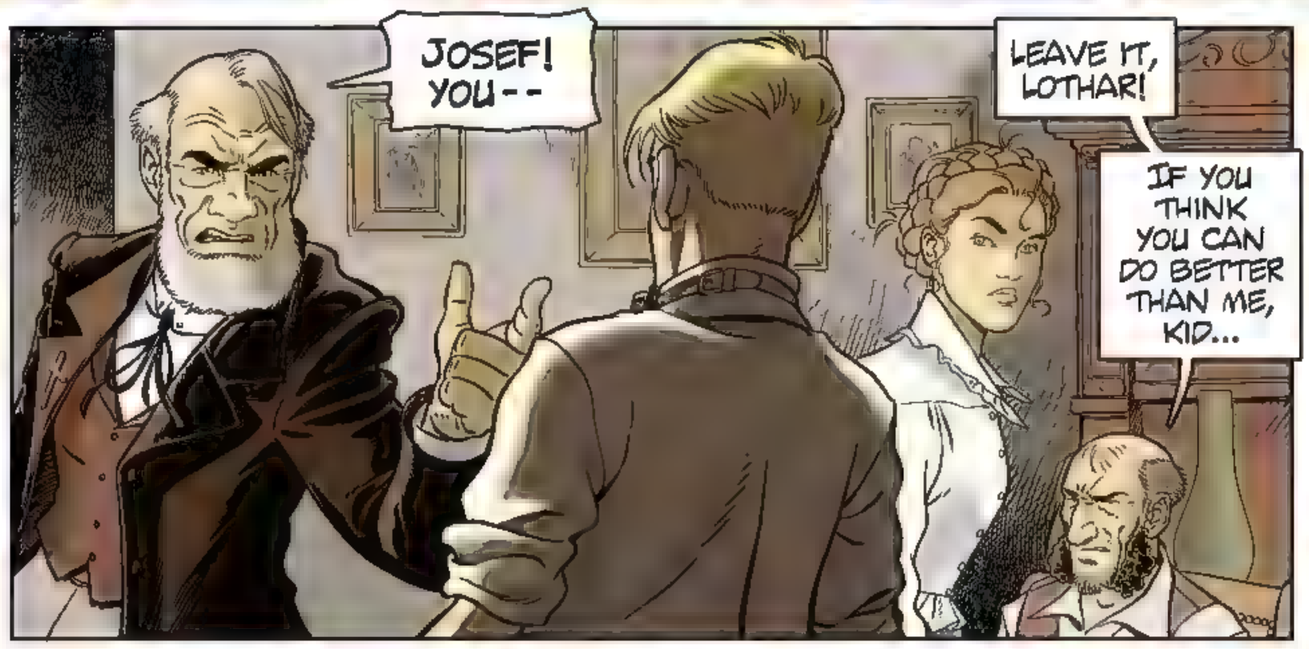
(1) "GOD BE WITH US" IN GERMAN.

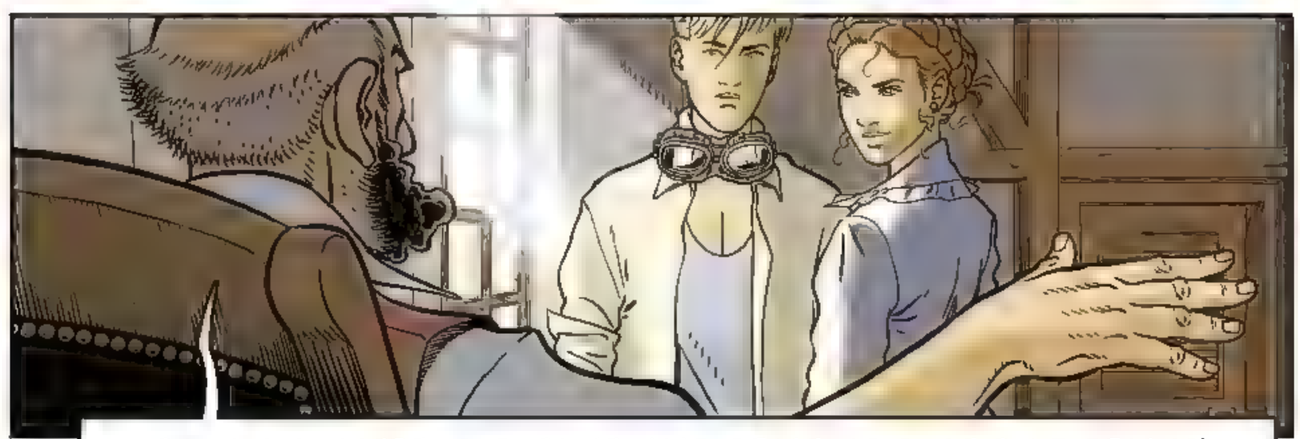

AND DON'T YOU BE LETTING YOUR HEAD GET SO BIG THAT IT EXPLODES!
HOW IS YOUR HUSBAND, SILKE?
LIKE AN OLD MAN WHO'S BROKEN HIS ARM, DOCTOR!
NOT TOO TIGHT, JOSEF!
THE SPLINT IS SUPPOSED TO HOLD THE LIMB IN PLACE, NOT CUT OFF THE BLOOD SUPPLY!
HE'S VERY CAREFUL, LOTHAR. HE'LL BE A GOOD DOCTOR, LIKE YOU!
DON'T FLATTER HIM, KLAUS! KIDS HIS AGE THINK THEY KNOW IT ALL.
HE SPREADS HIMSELF THINLY AND DOESN'T FOCUS ON HIS STUDIES.
AS SOON AS THIS WRETCHED WAR'S OVER, I'M SENDING HIM TO MY SISTER IN GERMANY, TO STUDY MEDICINE.
I WON'T GO TO GERMANY! ANYWAY, THIS WAR WILL NEVER END...
TOC TOC





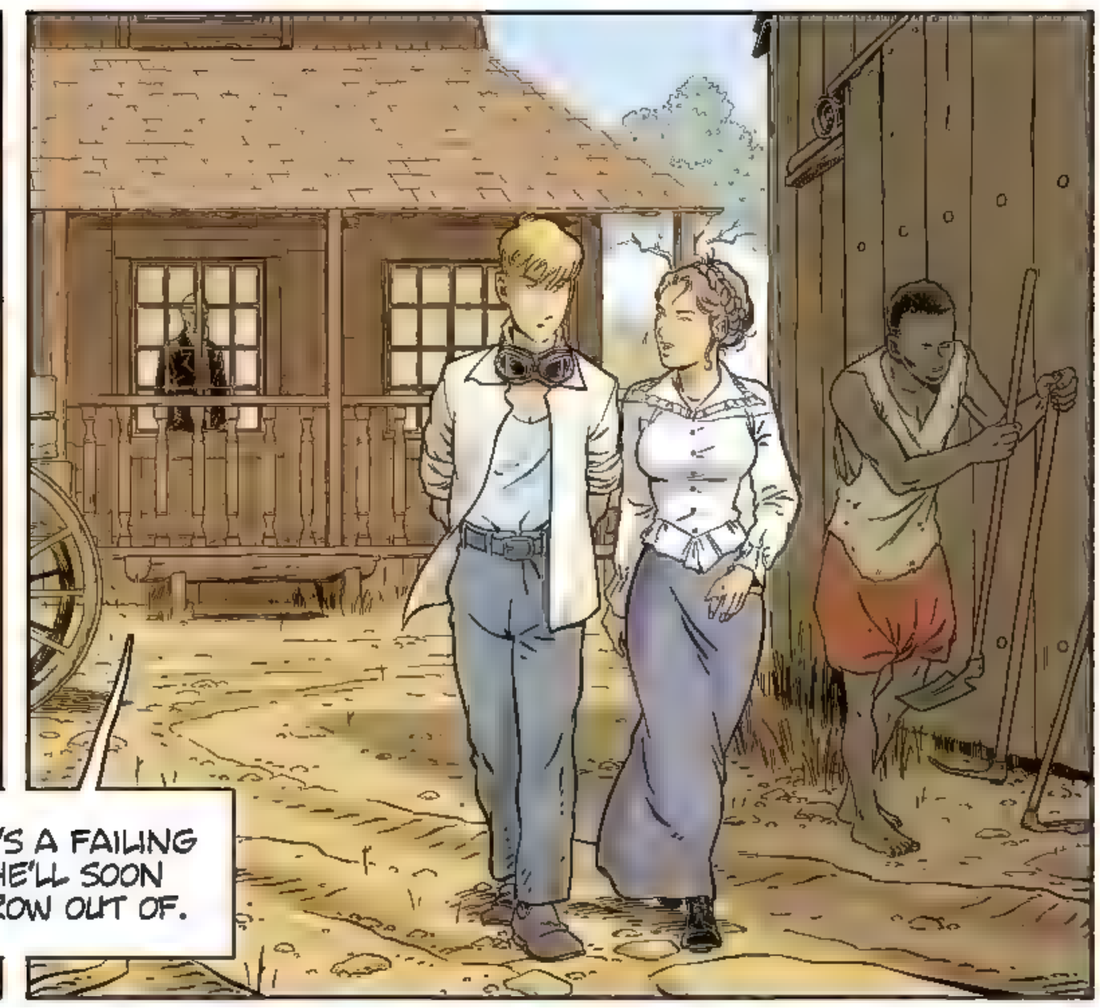






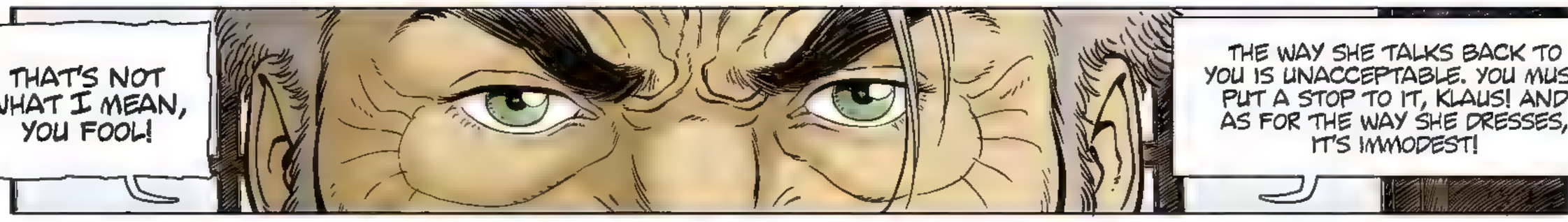
(1) NATIVES FIGHTING FOR THE GERMANS.

YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT YOUR SON, LOTHAR. WHAT ARROGANCE TO THINK HE CAN SUCCEED WHERE I FAILED!
I'D SAY IT'S MORE A KIND OF NAIVETE. THE INEXPERIENCE OF YOUTH...

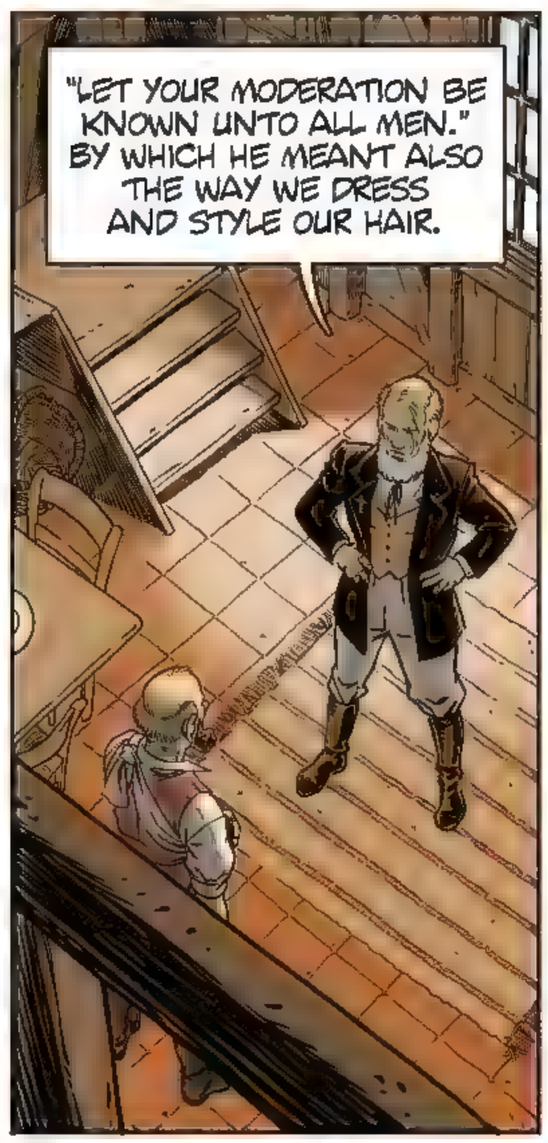

IT'S A FAILING HE'LL SOON GROW OUT OF.

I'LL SEE TO THAT!

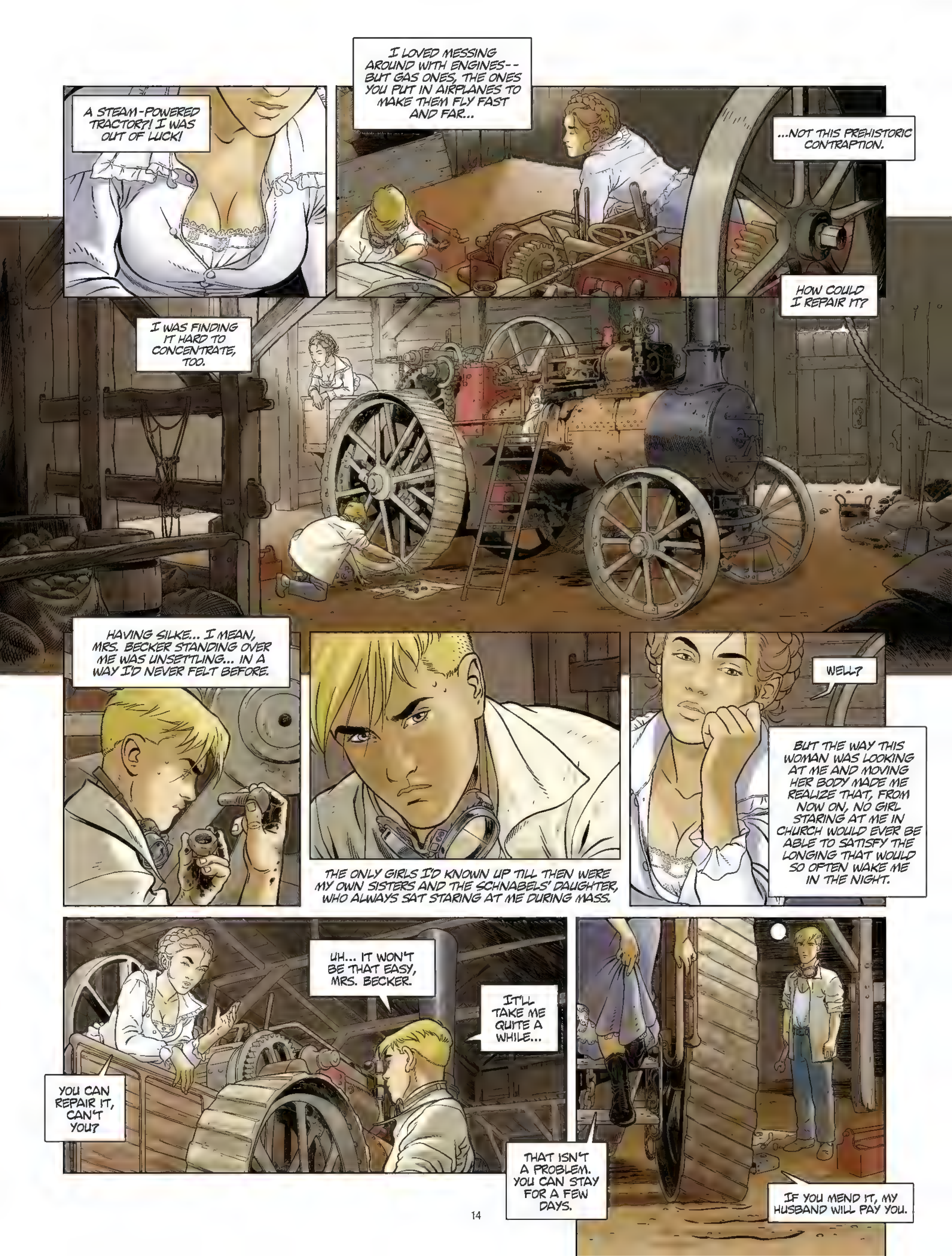
BY THE WAY, I FEEL I MUST TELL YOU, SPEAKING AS YOUR PASTOR...
...THAT YOUR WIFE'S BEHAVIOR IS UNBECOMING OF A CHRISTIAN WOMAN, KLAUS!
?
BUT PASTOR, I... SHE CAN'T MAKE IT TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY MORNING. IT'S MORE THAN THREE HOURS' RIDE BY CARRIAGE, AND--


THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN, YOU FOOL!
THE WAY SHE TALKS BACK TO YOU IS UNACCEPTABLE. YOU MUST PUT A STOP TO IT, KLAUS! AND AS FOR THE WAY SHE DRESSES, IT'S IMMODEST!

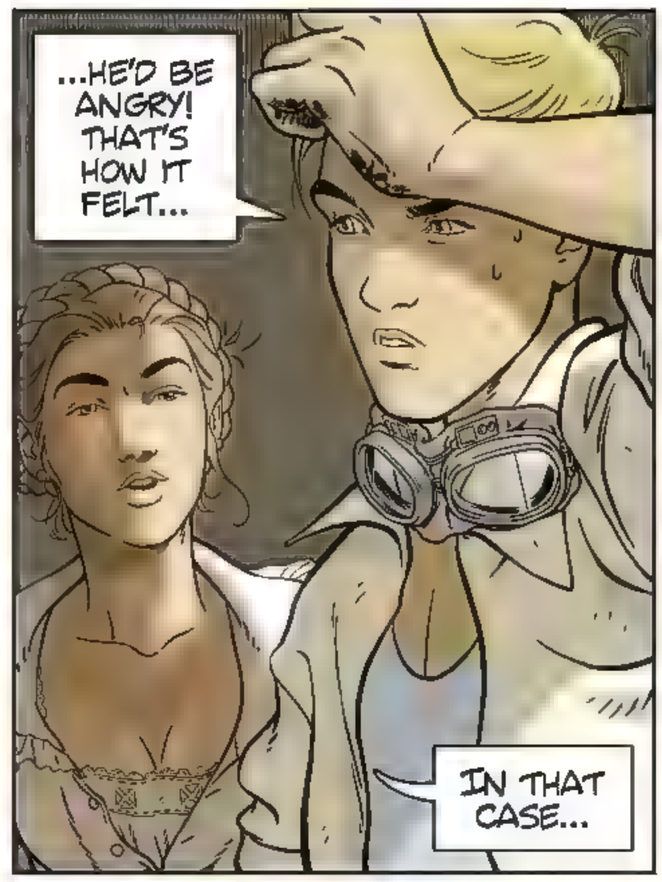
HER... HER CLOTHES? BUT THEY'RE QUITE NORMAL FOR A--
YES, BUT SHE WEARS THEM AS IF SHE WANTS TO MAKE HERSELF ATTRACTIVE. IT'S THE SAME WITH HER HAIR. DON'T YOU REMEMBER PAUL'S ADVICE TO THE PHILIPPIANS?

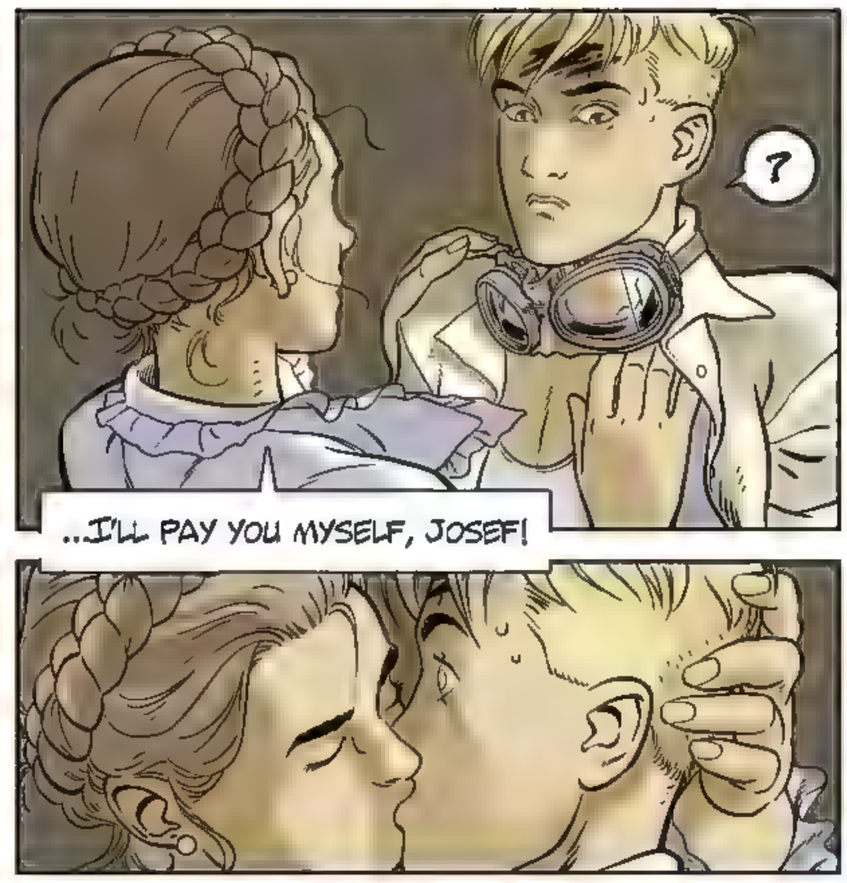

"LET YOUR MODERATION BE KNOWN UNTO ALL MEN." BY WHICH HE MEANT ALSO THE WAY WE DRESS AND STYLE OUR HAIR.

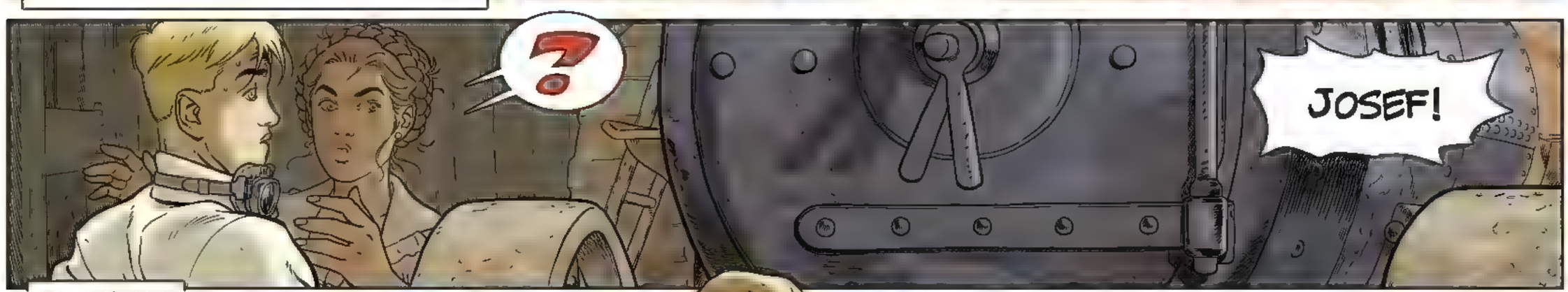
DON'T YOU SEE THAT YOUR WIFE'S TRYING TO SEDUCE OTHER MEN?! SHE'S STILL YOUNG, AND HER BODY IS CRYING OUT TO PROCREATE!
?
WHY DO YOU STILL HAVE NO CHILDREN, KLAUS?
ARE YOU EXERCISING YOUR CONJUGAL RIGHTS?

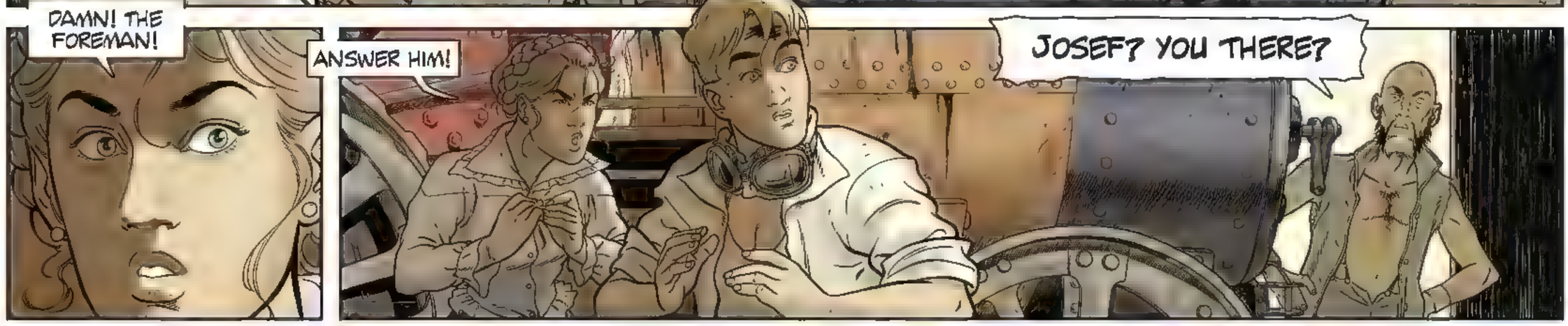

A STEAM-POWERED TRACTOR?! I WAS OUT OF LUCK!
I LOVED MESSING AROUND WITH ENGINES-- BUT GAS ONES, THE ONES YOU PUT IN AIRPLANES TO MAKE THEM FLY FAST AND FAR...
...NOT THIS PREHISTORIC CONTRAPTION.
HOW COULD I REPAIR IT?
I WAS FINDING IT HARD TO CONCENTRATE, TOO.
HAVING SILKE... I MEAN, MRS. BECKER STANDING OVER ME WAS UNSETTLING... IN A WAY I'D NEVER FELT BEFORE.
THE ONLY GIRLS I'D KNOWN UP TILL THEN WERE MY OWN SISTERS AND THE SCHNABELS' DAUGHTER, WHO ALWAYS SAT STARING AT ME DURING MASS.
WELL?
BUT THE WAY THIS WOMAN WAS LOOKING AT ME AND MOVING HER BODY MADE ME REALIZE THAT, FROM NOW ON, NO GIRL STARING AT ME IN CHURCH WOULD EVER BE ABLE TO SATISFY THE LONGING THAT WOULD SO OFTEN WAKE ME IN THE NIGHT.
YOU CAN REPAIR IT, CAN'T YOU?
UH... IT WON'T BE THAT EASY, MRS. BECKER.
IT'LL TAKE ME QUITE A WHILE...
THAT ISN'T A PROBLEM. YOU CAN STAY FOR A FEW DAYS.
IF YOU MEND IT, MY HUSBAND WILL PAY YOU.

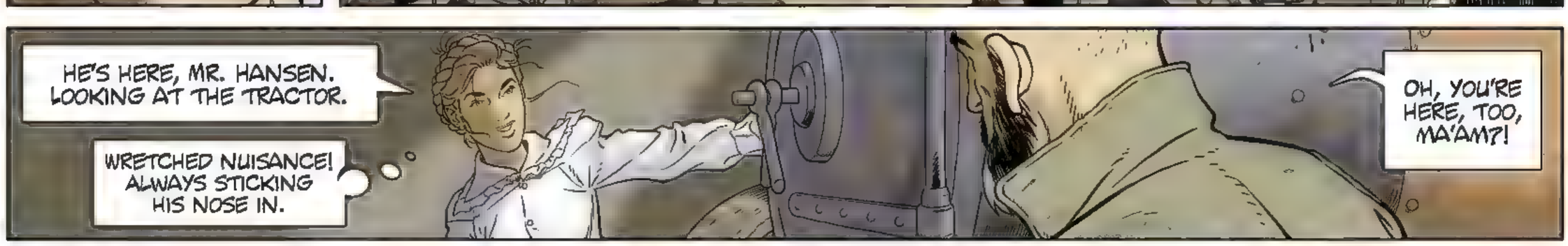
HUH?
I'M NOT SURE HE'D APPRECIATE ME MENDING IT! IN FACT, I THINK...

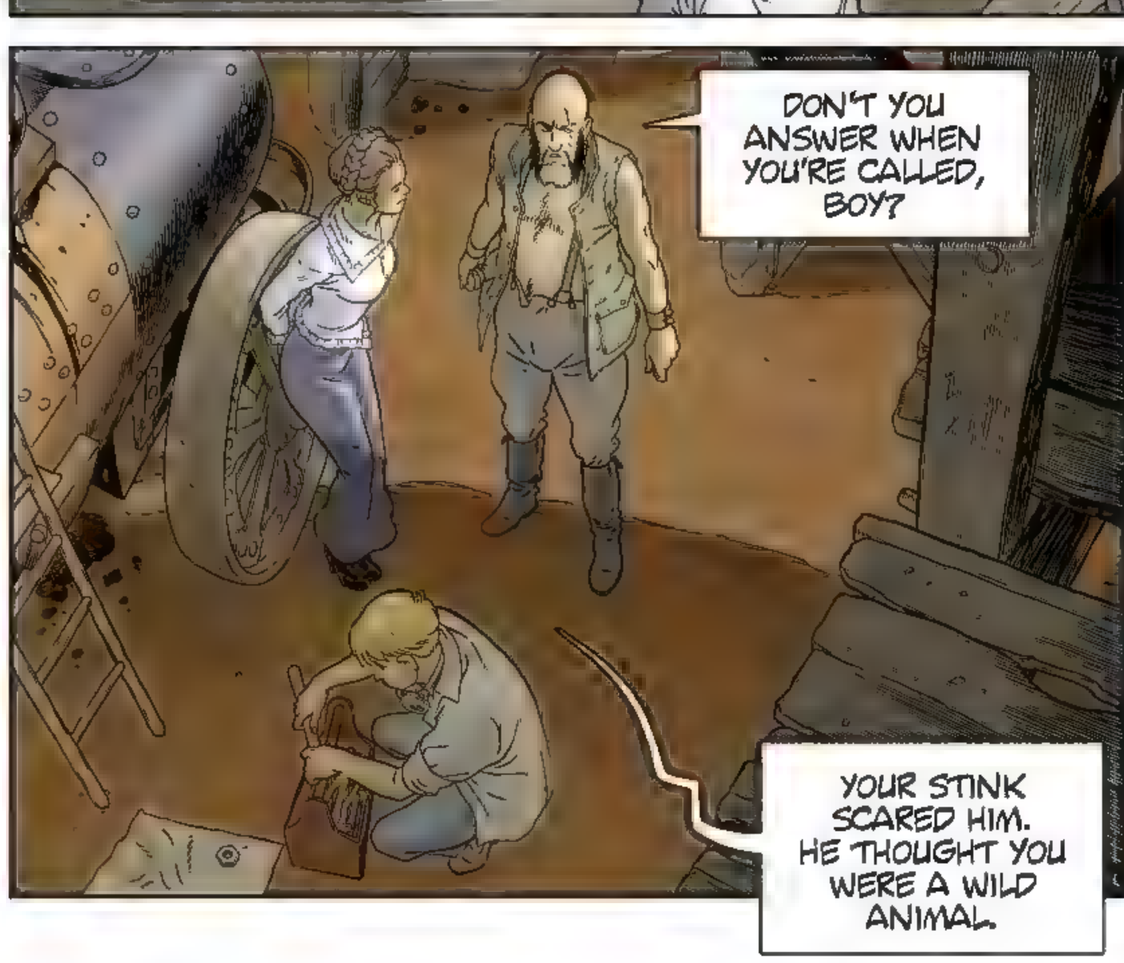

...HE'D BE ANGRY! THAT'S HOW IT FELT...
IN THAT CASE...

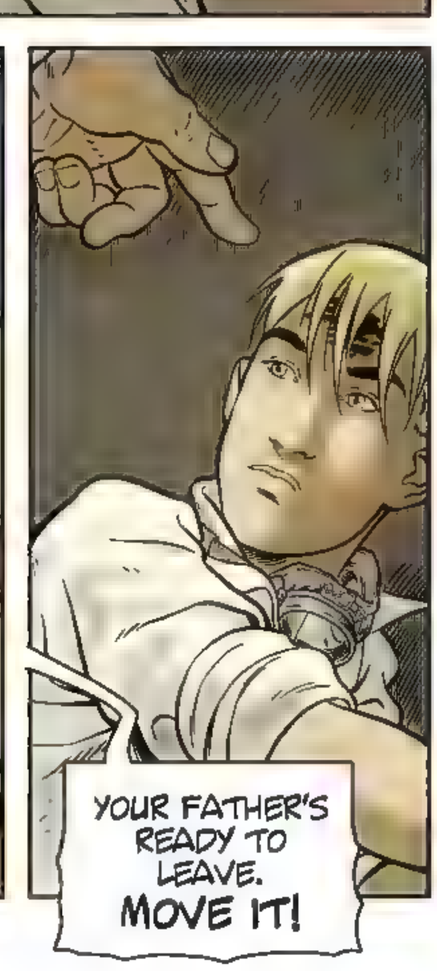

?
...I'LL PAY YOU MYSELF, JOSEF!


?
JOSEF!

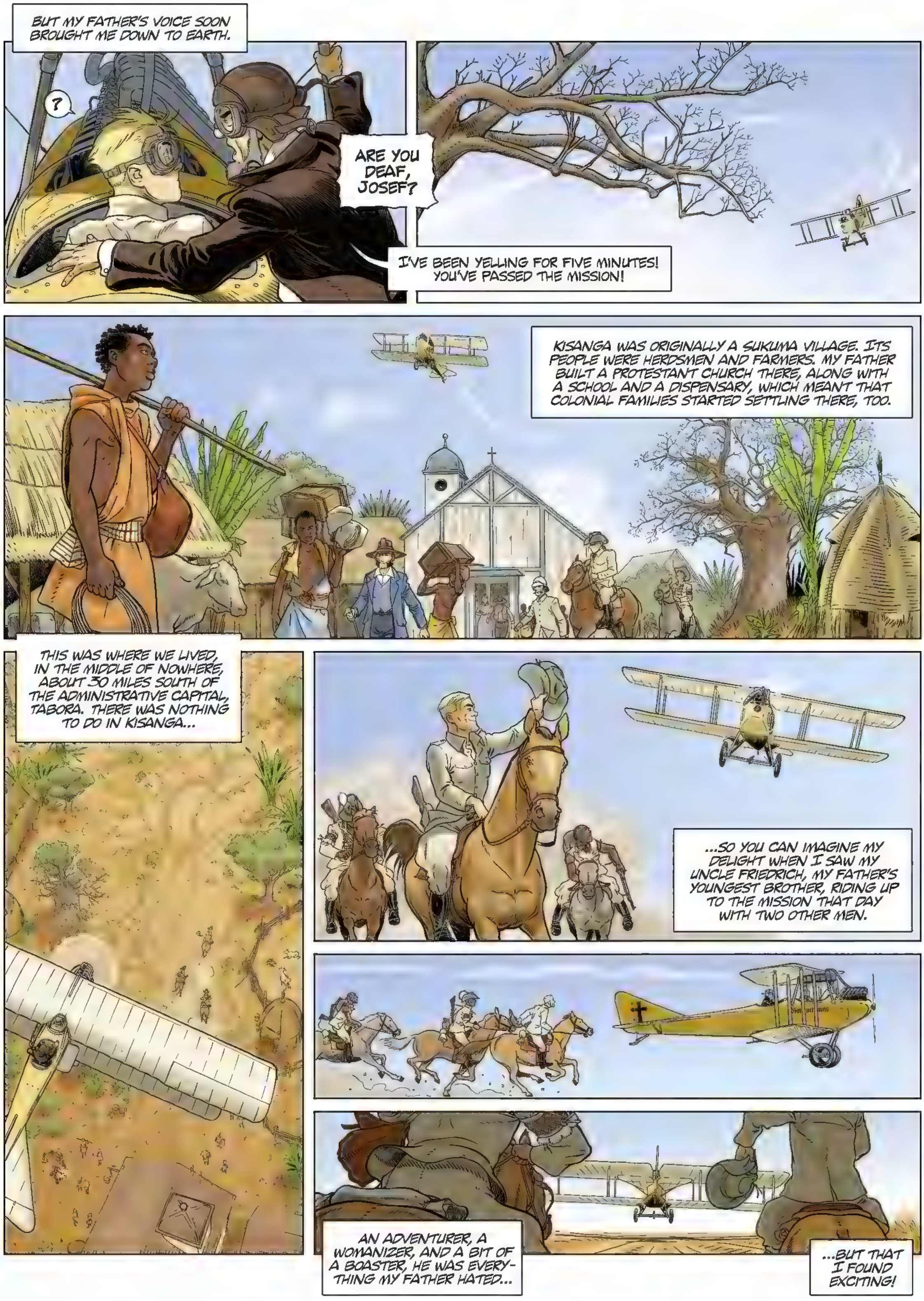

DAMN! THE FOREMAN!
ANSWER HIM!
JOSEF? YOU THERE?

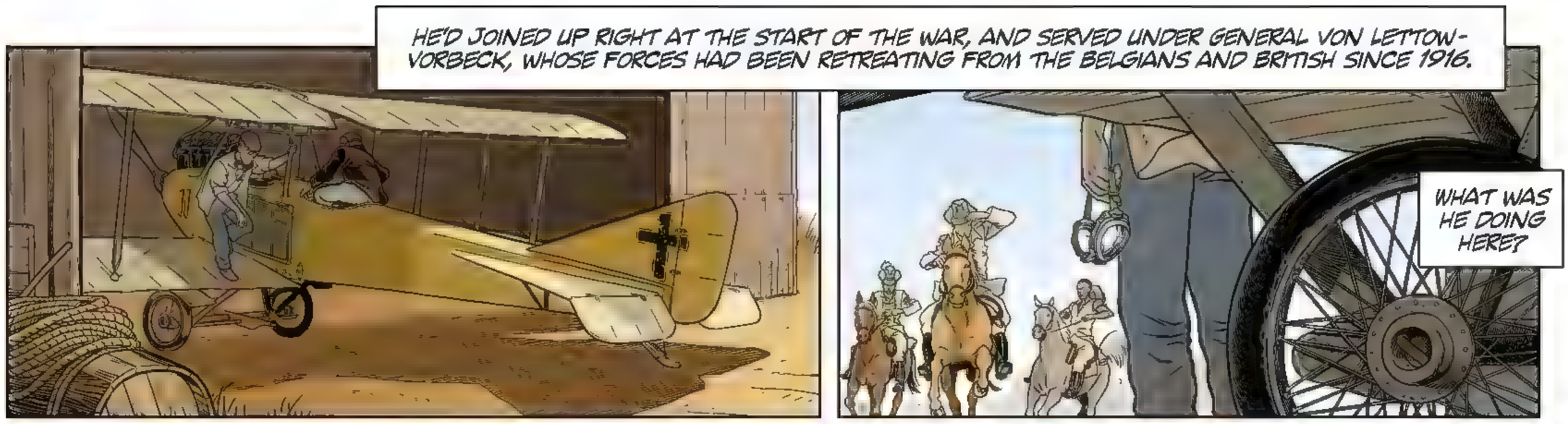

HE'S HERE, MR. HANSEN. LOOKING AT THE TRACTOR.
WRETCHED NUISANCE! ALWAYS STICKING HIS NOSE IN.
OH, YOU'RE HERE, TOO, MA'AM?!

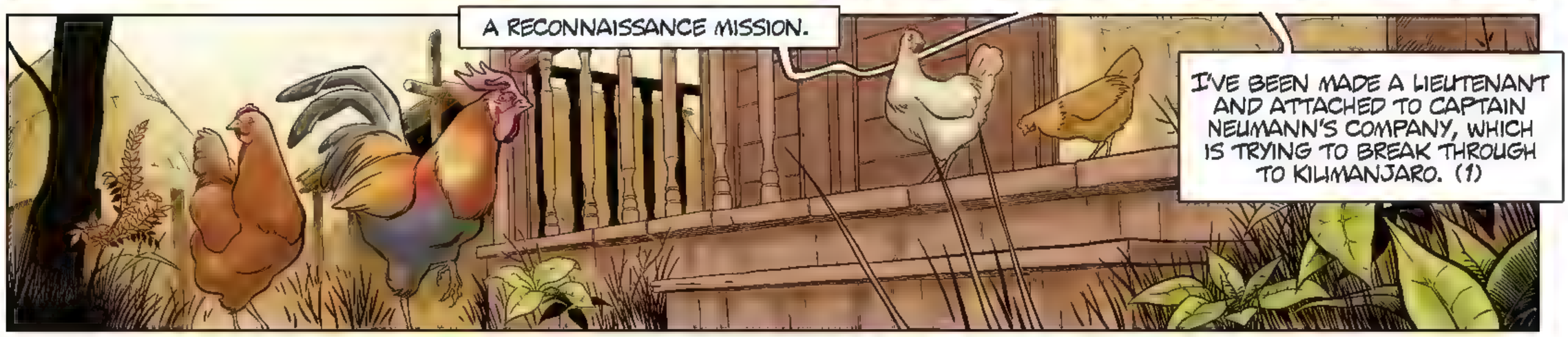

DON'T YOU ANSWER WHEN YOU'RE CALLED, BOY?
YOUR STINK SCARED HIM. HE THOUGHT YOU WERE A WILD ANIMAL.

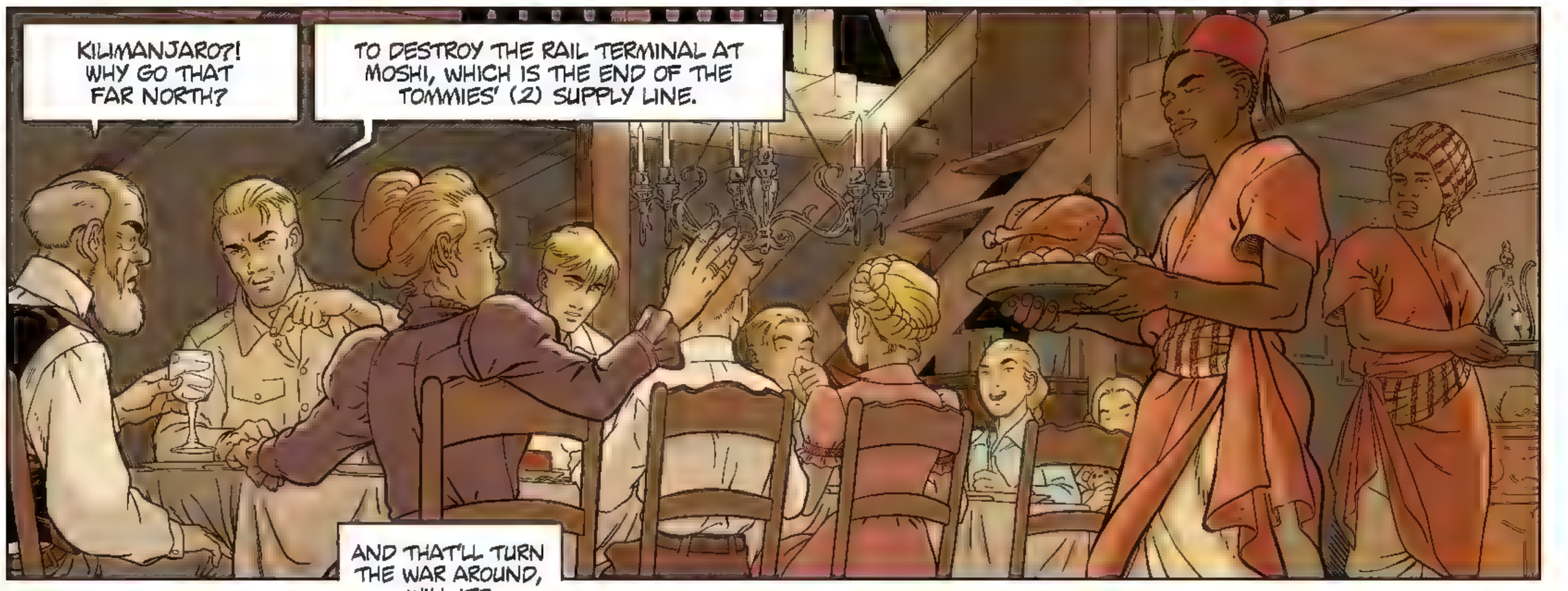

YOUR FATHER'S READY TO LEAVE. MOVE IT!

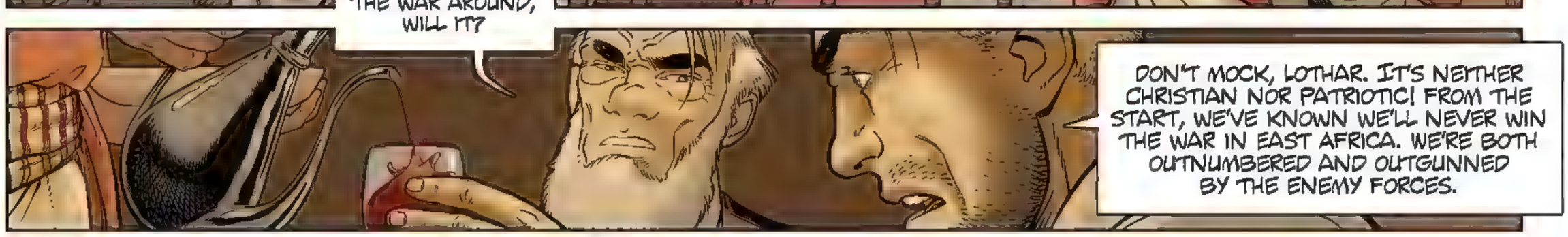
AT MRS. BECKER'S INSISTENCE, AND TO MY GREAT SURPRISE, MY FATHER AGREED TO MY COMING BACK ANOTHER TIME TO TRY TO REPAIR THE OLD TRACTOR. HE SAW THIS AS HAVING TWO POSSIBLE BENEFITS.
FOR ME, AS A USEFUL TEST OF MY RESOURCEFULNESS AND DETERMINATION. AND FOR MR. BECKER, AS AN EXERCISE IN HUMILITY IF I DID SUCCEED.
MR. BECKER DIDN'T DARE ARGUE WITH HIS PASTOR...
...AND I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO SPENDING A FEW MORE DAYS IN THE COMPANY OF MRS. BECKER...
...WHO I WAS ALREADY DYING TO SEE AGAIN!
SILKE... MY FIRST KISS!
TO SAY THAT I WAS "IN THE CLOUDS" WAS MORE TRUE THAN IT HAD EVER BEEN!


BUT MY FATHER'S VOICE SOON BROUGHT ME DOWN TO EARTH.
?
ARE YOU DEAF, JOSEF?
I'VE BEEN YELLING FOR FIVE MINUTES! YOU'VE PASSED THE MISSION!
KISANGA WAS ORIGINALLY A SUKUMA VILLAGE. ITS PEOPLE WERE HERDSMEN AND FARMERS. MY FATHER BUILT A PROTESTANT CHURCH THERE, ALONG WITH A SCHOOL AND A DISPENSARY, WHICH MEANT THAT COLONIAL FAMILIES STARTED SETTLING THERE, TOO.
THIS WAS WHERE WE LIVED, IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, ABOUT 30 MILES SOUTH OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE CAPITAL, TABORA. THERE WAS NOTHING TO DO IN KISANGA...
...SO YOU CAN IMAGINE MY DELIGHT WHEN I SAW MY UNCLE FRIEDRICH, MY FATHER'S YOUNGEST BROTHER, RIDING UP TO THE MISSION THAT DAY WITH TWO OTHER MEN.
AN ADVENTURER, A WOMANIZER, AND A BIT OF A BOASTER, HE WAS EVERYTHING MY FATHER HATED...
...BUT THAT I FOUND EXCITING!



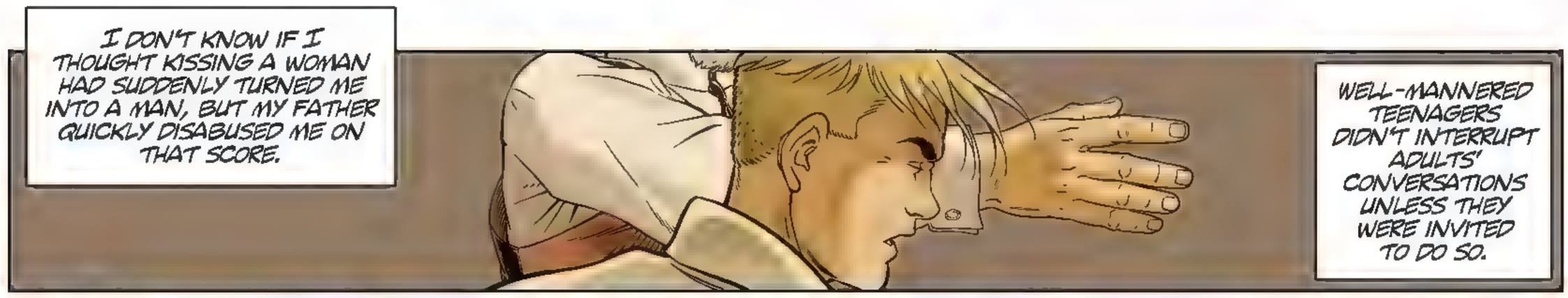




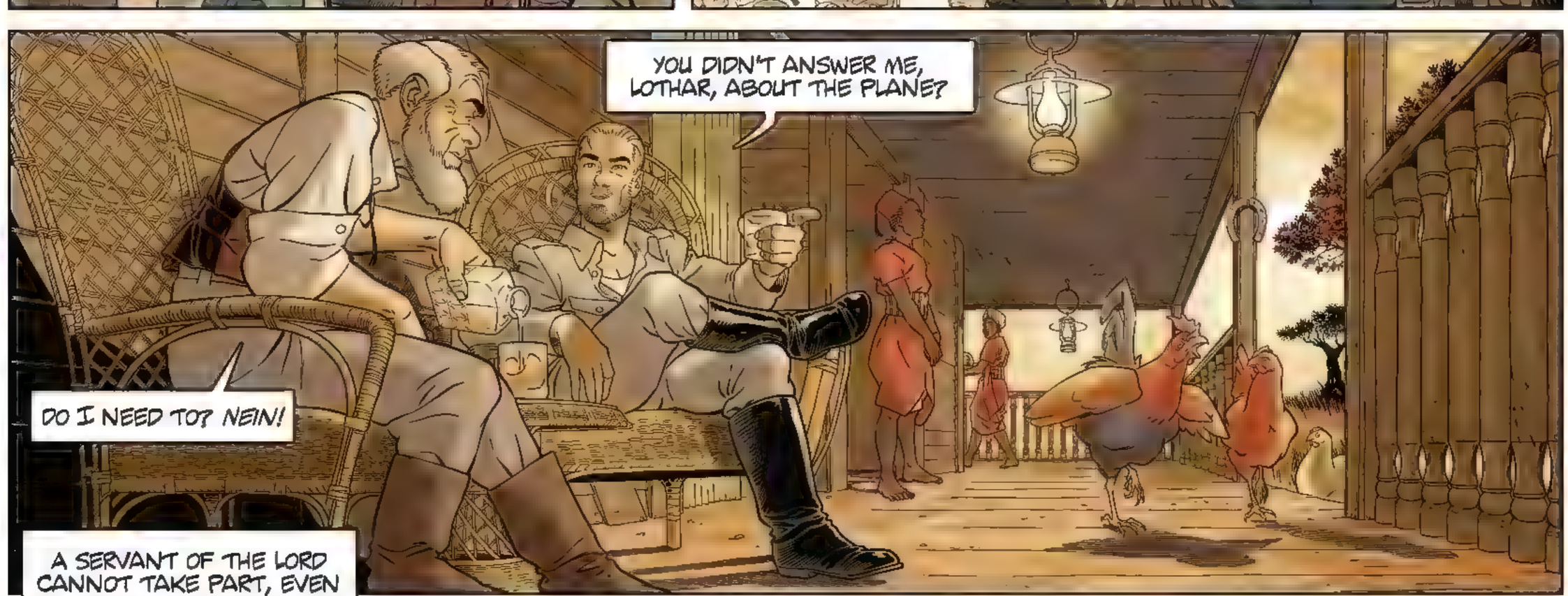


(1) ON THE BORDER WITH KENYA. (2) THE BRITISH. (3) "CHICKEN-CHOMPERS," I.E. THE BELGIANS.

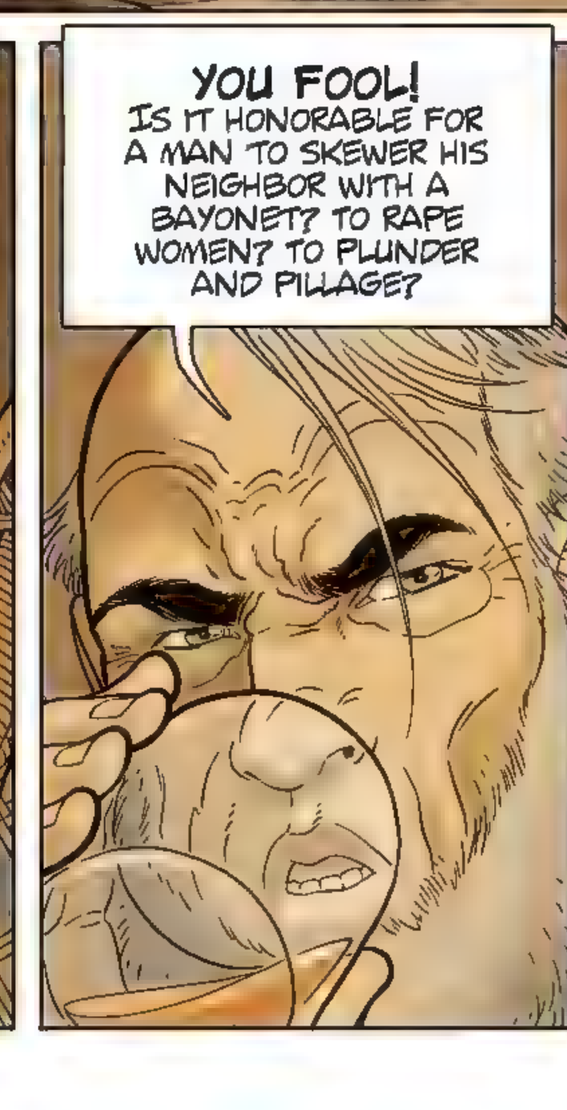
I HOPE GOD IS LISTENING--AND PUTS AN END TO THIS SENSELESS SLAUGHTER!
GOD CAN'T DO THAT ALONE, PASTOR!
HE NEEDS US ALL TO FIGHT ALONGSIDE HIM...
...AND THAT MEANS YOU.
WHAT?
YOU WANT ME TO BECOME A MURDERER?
HAVE YOU GONE MAD, FRIEDRICH?
HOW DARE YOU ASK ME TO GO AGAINST MY CONSCIENCE AND GOD'S OWN COMMANDMENTS?
I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO SHOOT THE ENEMY, LOTHAR. WE HAVE ASKARIS FOR THAT.
BUT YOU COULD BE OF GREAT SERVICE TO US BY LENDING US YOUR AIRPLANE TO SUPPORT THE RAID ON MOSHI!
BY FLYING AHEAD OF OUR FRONT LINE, YOU COULD WARN US OF THE ENEMY'S POSITION AND TROOP MOVEMENTS...
...WITHOUT HAVING TO KILL ANYONE!
THAT'S GREAT, FATHER! IT'S CALLED AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE. I READ AN ARTICLE IN A MAGAZINE ABOUT USING AIRPLANES THIS WAY IN MODERN WARFARE.
THAT WAY, YOU COULD DO YOUR DUTY AS A GERMAN... UH...
...WITHOUT BETRAYING YOUR ETHICS.


I DON'T KNOW IF I THOUGHT KISSING A WOMAN HAD SUDDENLY TURNED ME INTO A MAN, BUT MY FATHER QUICKLY DISABUSED ME ON THAT SCORE.
WELL-MANNERED TEENAGERS DIDN'T INTERRUPT ADULTS' CONVERSATIONS UNLESS THEY WERE INVITED TO DO SO.

YOU'RE GROUNDED FOR TWO WEEKS, JOSEF, STARTING NOW! GET YOUR THINGS.

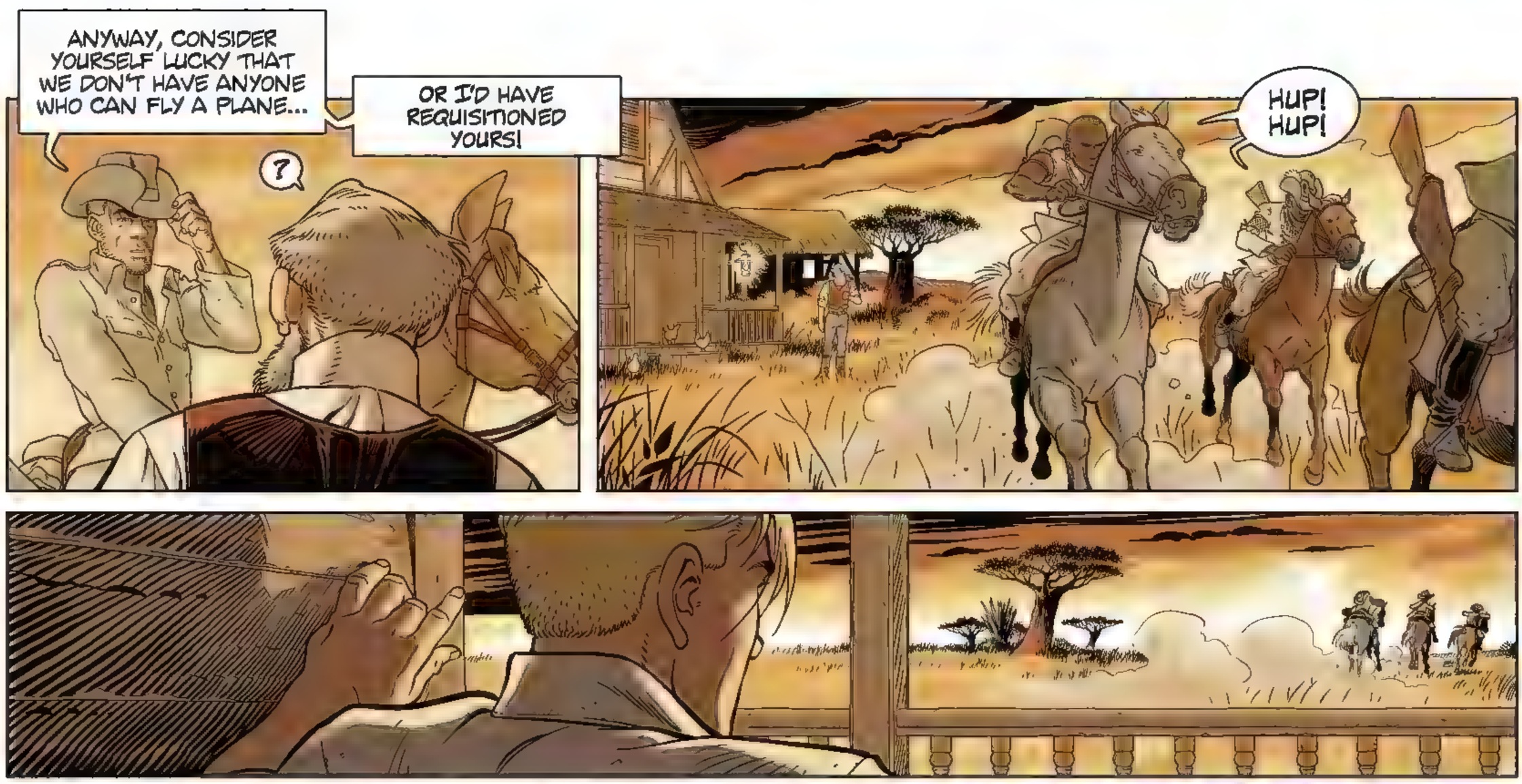

YOU DIDN'T ANSWER ME, LOTHAR, ABOUT THE PLANE?
DO I NEED TO? NEIN!

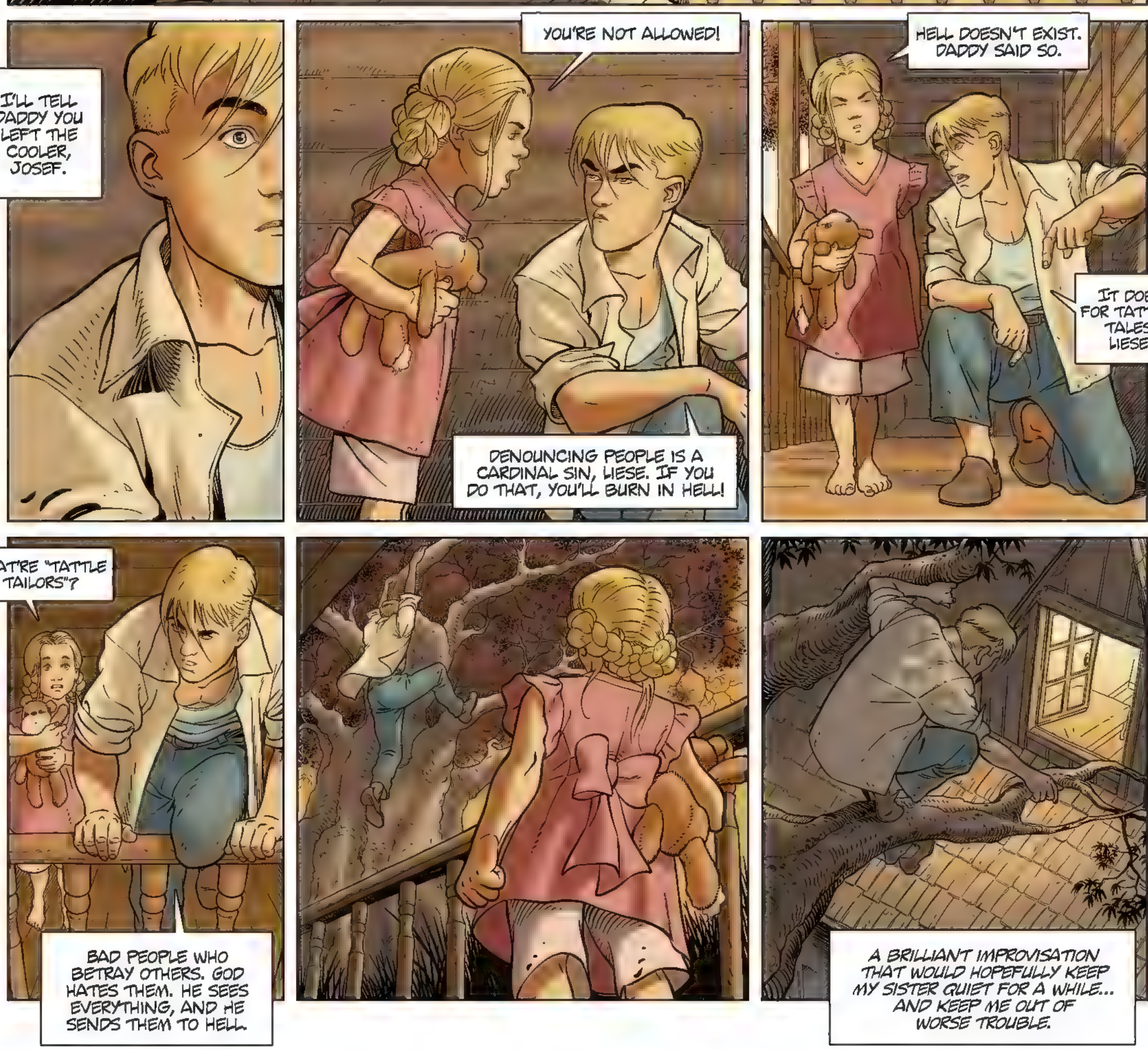
A SERVANT OF THE LORD CANNOT TAKE PART, EVEN INDIRECTLY, IN ANY ACTION THAT IS BY ITS VERY NATURE CONTRARY TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.
AAAAH, THE SACROSANCT SCRIPTURES! WHAT A CONVENIENT EXCUSE FOR NOT PUTTING YOUR LIFE IN DANGER! BUT WHAT ABOUT YOUR COUNTRY, LOTHAR, AND YOUR HONOR?

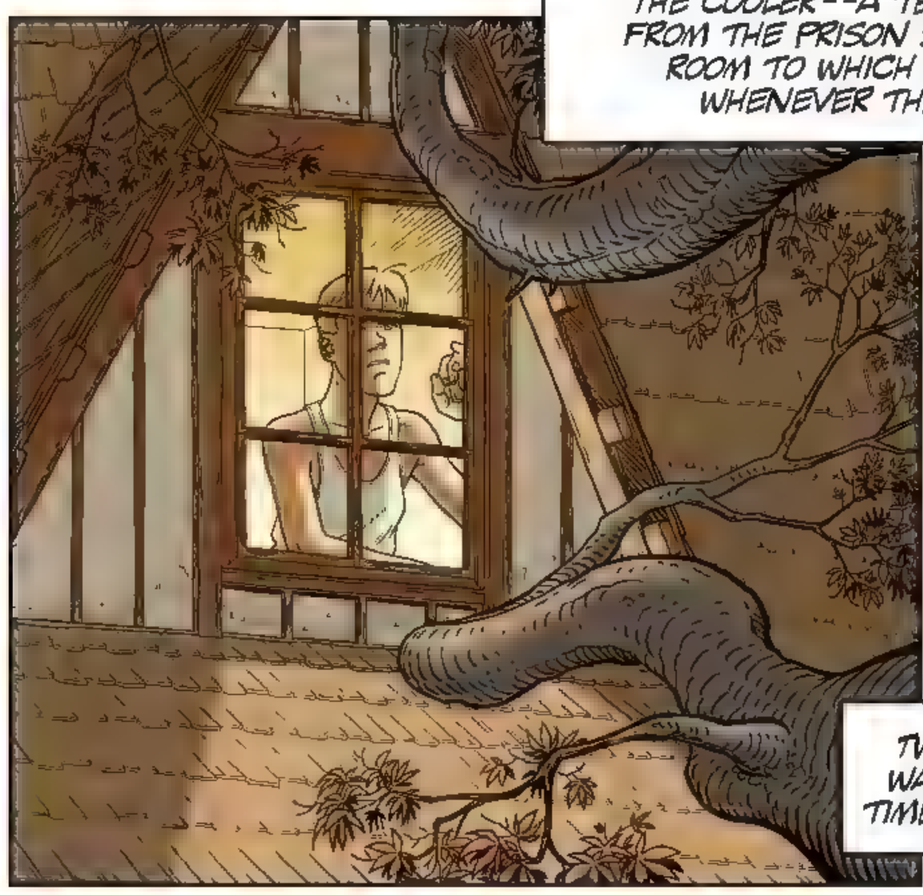

YOU FOOL! IS IT HONORABLE FOR A MAN TO SKEWER HIS NEIGHBOR WITH A BAYONET? TO RAPE WOMEN? TO PLUNDER AND PILLAGE?

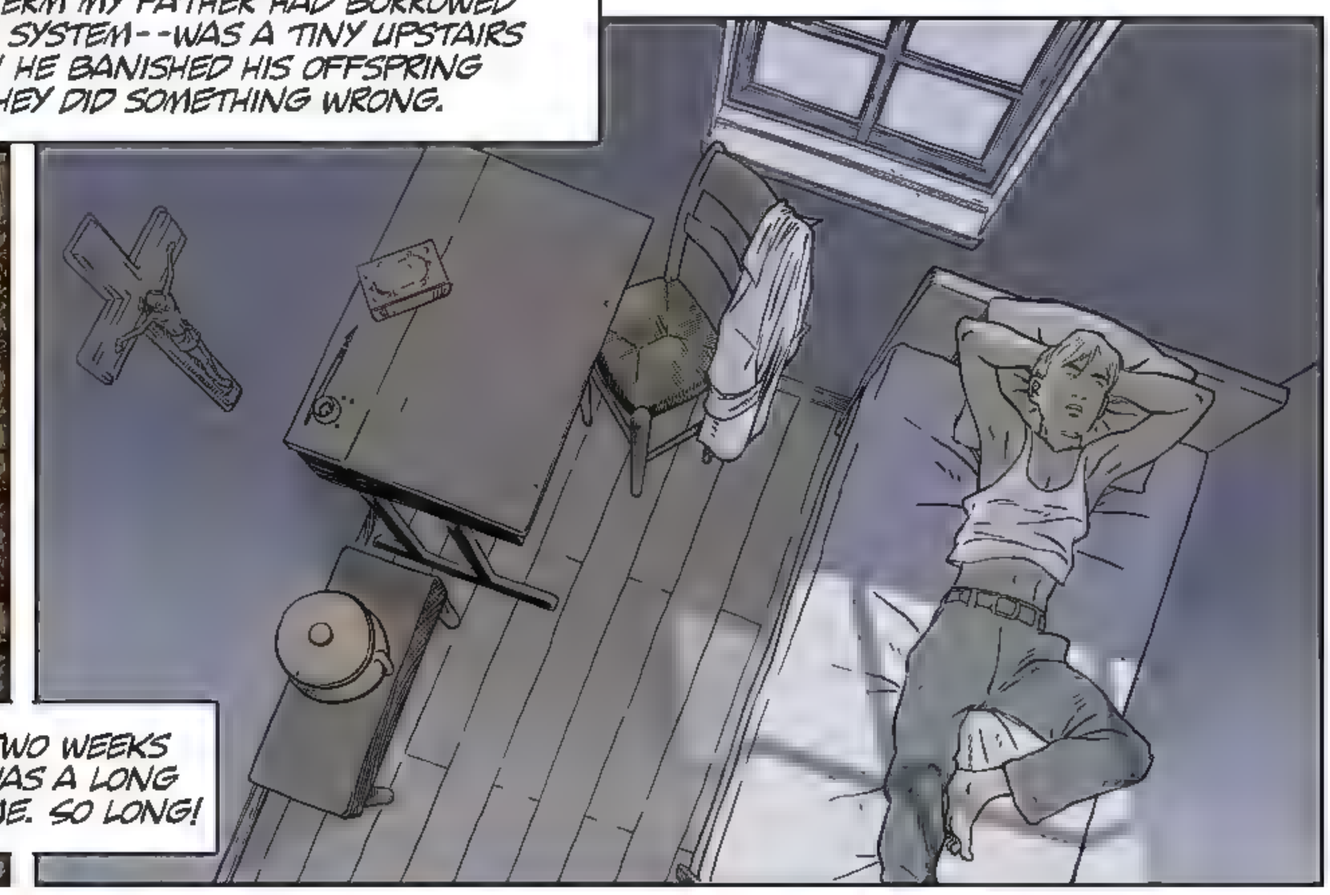
WAR IS THE DEVIL'S WORK!
IT MERELY BRINGS OUT MAN'S DARK SIDE.

MY MISSION IS TO ELEVATE THE PEOPLE OF AFRICA THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD AND OUR ENLIGHTENED CIVILIZATION. THAT, BROTHER, IS A NOBLER CAUSE!
THEY ALREADY HAVE GODS, LOTHAR, WHO PERFORM PRETTY MUCH THE SAME FUNCTION AS YOUR SINGLE, ALL-POWERFUL GOD.
BLASPHEMY! HOW DARE YOU?
AND AS FOR YOUR "CIVILIZATION"...
...IT DOESN'T SEEM VERY "ENLIGHTENED" TO ME. YOU AND CONSTANCE TEACHING BLACK CHILDREN TO READ? TO TURN THEM INTO WHAT?
CLEVER MONKEYS?
AND YOU WANT TO BE THEIR DOCTOR, BUT WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT AFRICAN ILLNESSES? CAN YOU DO ANY BETTER THAN THEIR WITCH DOCTORS?
BELIEVE ME, THESE PEOPLE HAVE LIVED WITHOUT US UP TILL NOW, AND IT HASN'T DONE THEM ANY HARM.
YOU'RE THE FOOL IF YOU CAN'T SEE THAT YOUR "MISSION" IS JUST A LICENSE TO EXPAND AND ENRICH THE GERMAN EMPIRE.
AND I SINCERELY HOPE, FRIEDRICH, THAT YOUR GERMAN EMPIRE WON'T ONE DAY COME TO REGRET HAVING TAUGHT ILLITERATE AFRICANS HOW TO CONDUCT MODERN WARFARE.
IT MIGHT, LOTHAR...
IT MIGHT!
BUT THEY HAVEN'T YET LEARNED HOW TO MANUFACTURE GUNS!

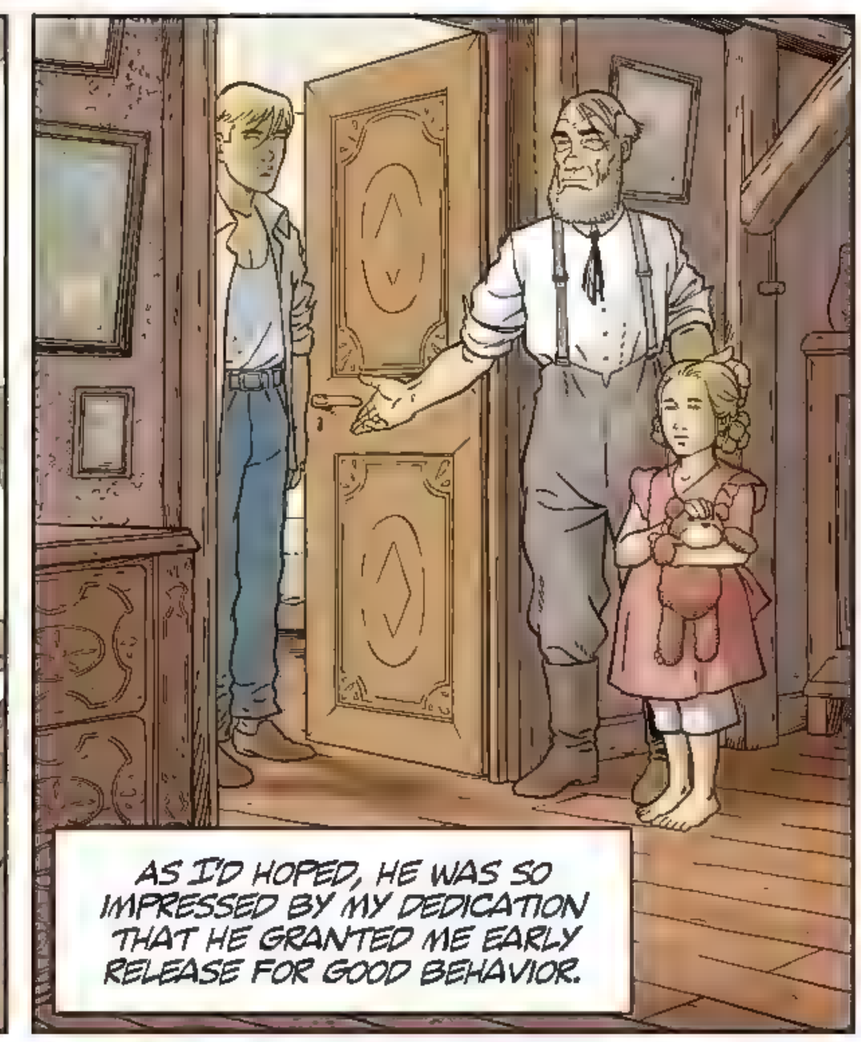

ANYWAY, CONSIDER YOURSELF LUCKY THAT WE DON'T HAVE ANYONE WHO CAN FLY A PLANE...
OR I'D HAVE REQUISITIONED YOURS!
?
HUP! HUP!

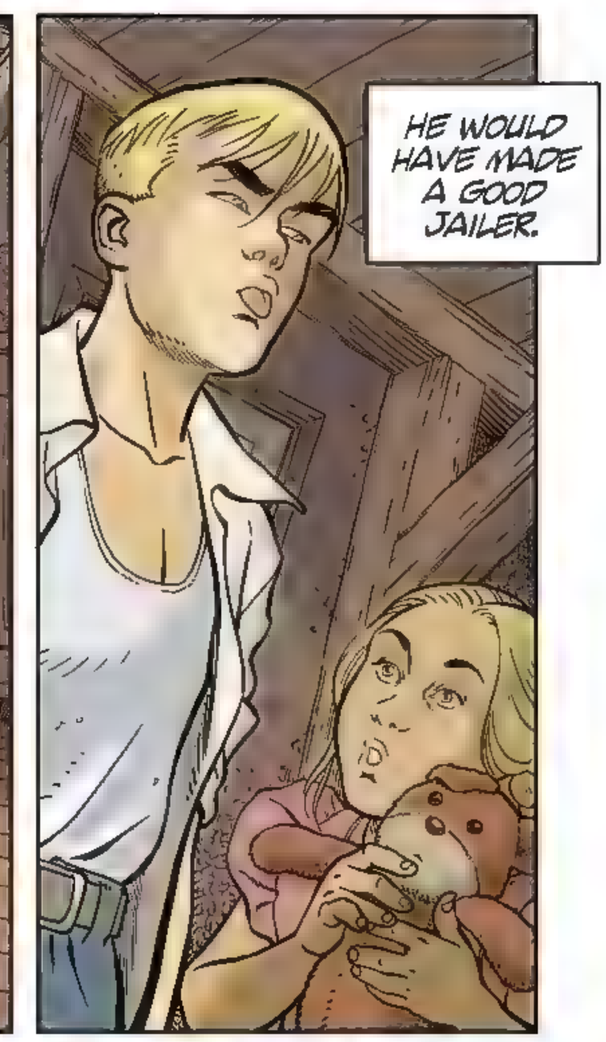

I'LL TELL DADDY YOU LEFT THE COOLER, JOSEF.
YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED!
DENOUNCING PEOPLE IS A CARDINAL SIN, LIESE. IF YOU DO THAT, YOU'LL BURN IN HELL!
HELL DOESN'T EXIST. DADDY SAID SO.
IT DOES FOR TATTLE-TALES, LIESE!
WHAT'RE "TATTLE TAILORS"?
BAD PEOPLE WHO BETRAY OTHERS. GOD HATES THEM. HE SEES EVERYTHING, AND HE SENDS THEM TO HELL.
A BRILLIANT IMPROVISATION THAT WOULD HOPEFULLY KEEP MY SISTER QUIET FOR A WHILE... AND KEEP ME OUT OF WORSE TROUBLE.

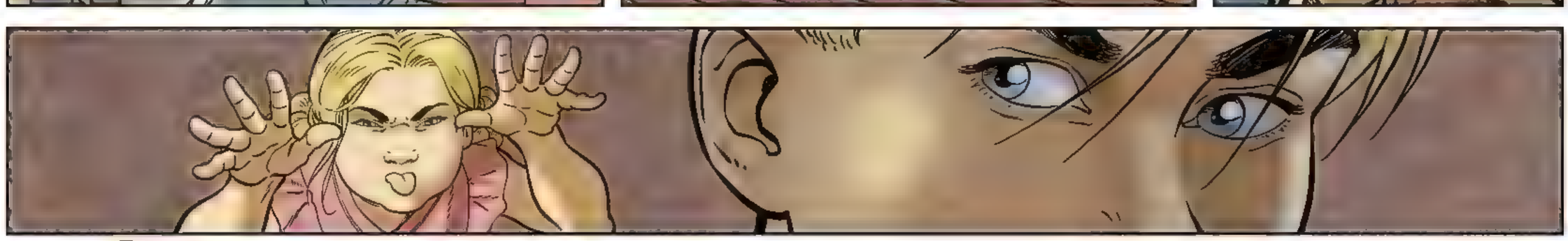


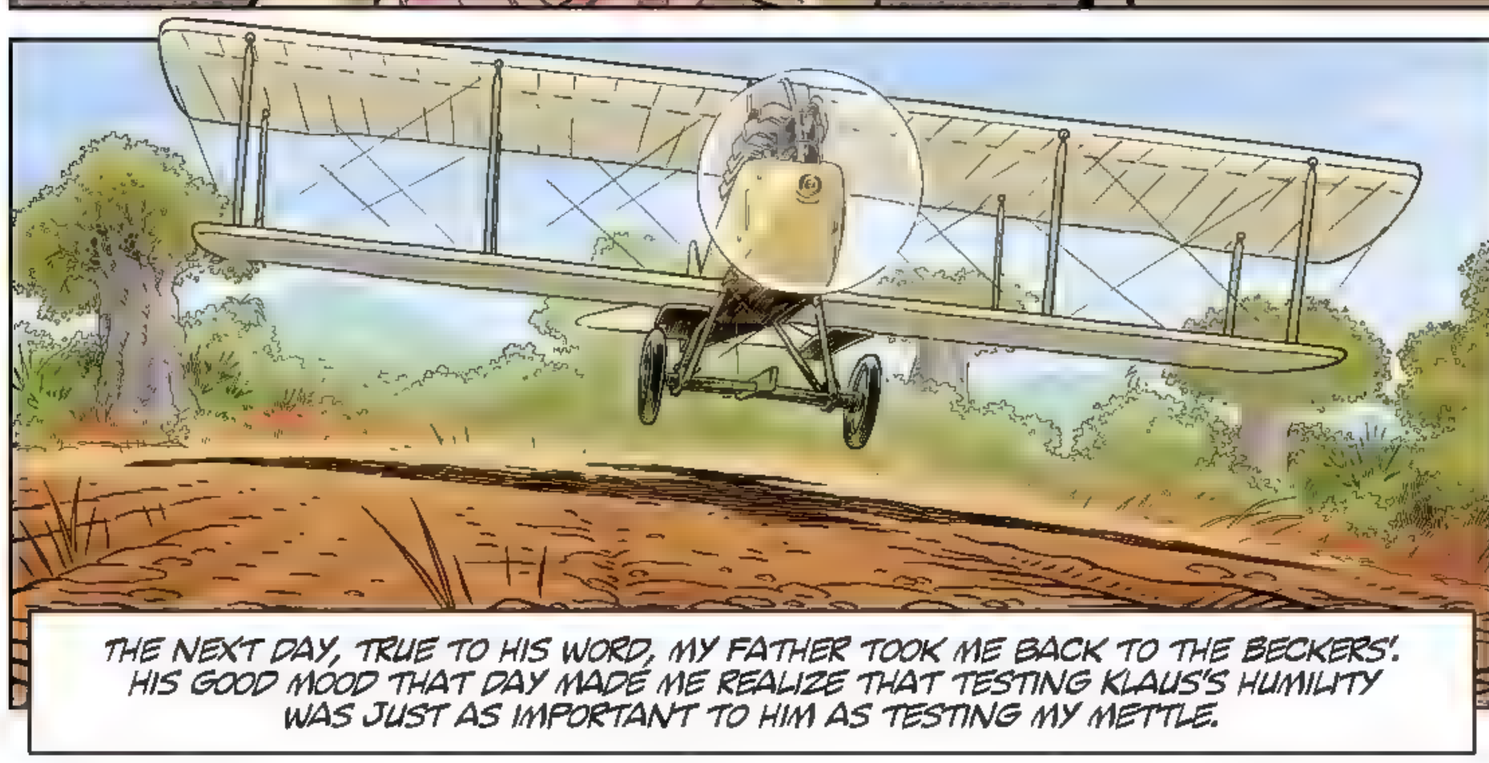

THE COOLER--A TERM MY FATHER HAD BORROWED FROM THE PRISON SYSTEM--WAS A TINY UPSTAIRS ROOM TO WHICH HE BANISHED HIS OFFSPRING WHENEVER THEY DID SOMETHING WRONG.
TWO WEEKS WAS A LONG TIME. SO LONG!

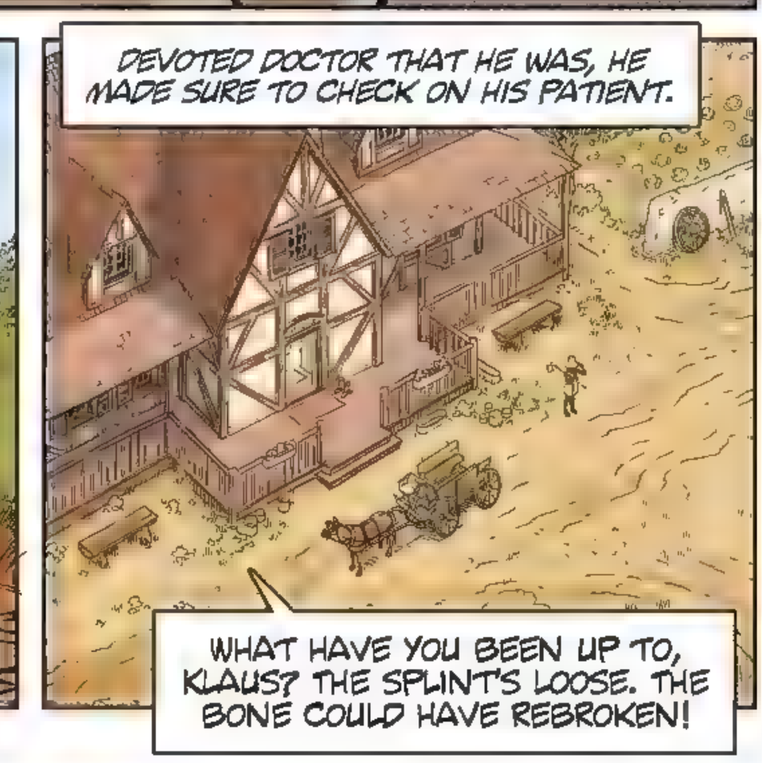
TO MAKE IT GO QUICKER, I SPENT THE WHOLE TIME CRAMMING--ALGEBRA, GEOMETRY, CHEMISTRY, NATURAL HISTORY, AND ALL THE OTHER SUBJECTS MY FATHER TAUGHT US HIMSELF.


AS I'D HOPED, HE WAS SO IMPRESSED BY MY DEDICATION THAT HE GRANTED ME EARLY RELEASE FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR.

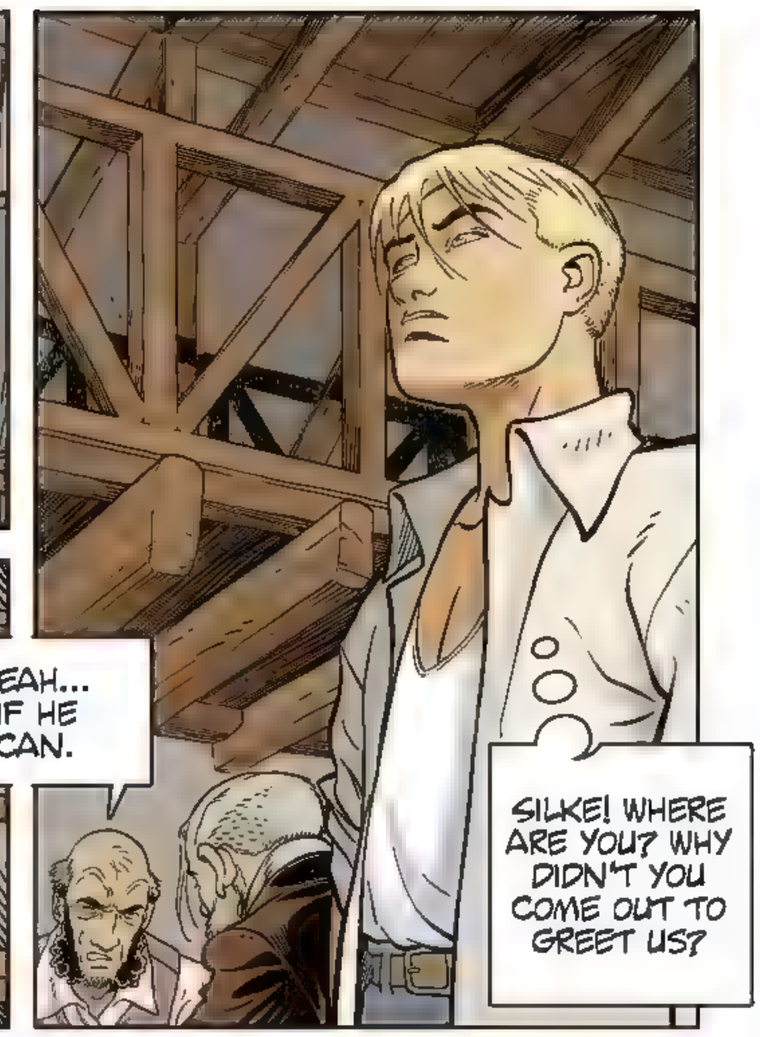

HE WOULD HAVE MADE A GOOD JAILER.

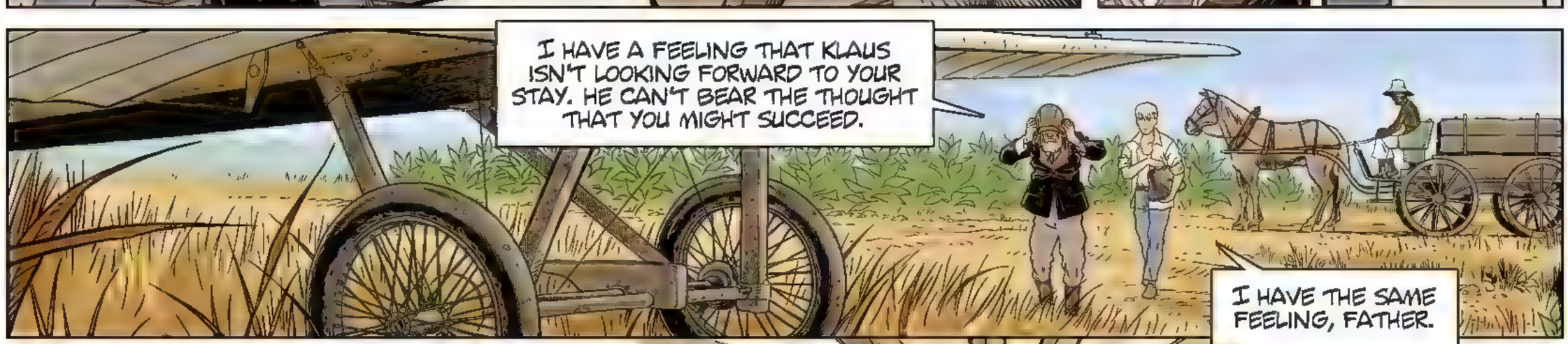



THE NEXT DAY, TRUE TO HIS WORD, MY FATHER TOOK ME BACK TO THE BECKERS'. HIS GOOD MOOD THAT DAY MADE ME REALIZE THAT TESTING KLAUS'S HUMILITY WAS JUST AS IMPORTANT TO HIM AS TESTING MY METTLE.

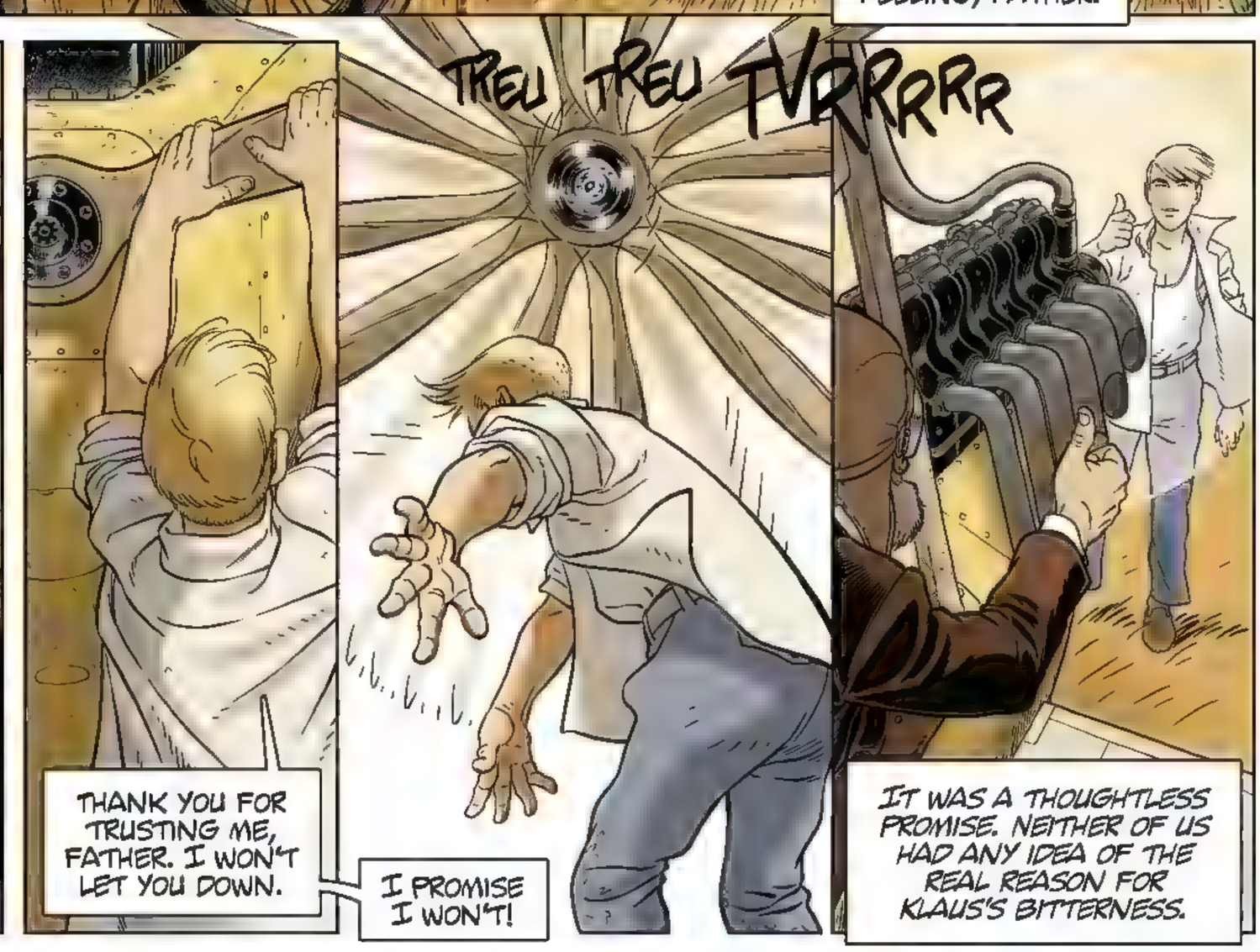

DEVOTED DOCTOR THAT HE WAS, HE MADE SURE TO CHECK ON HIS PATIENT.
WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO, KLAUS? THE SPLINT'S LOOSE. THE BONE COULD HAVE REBROKEN!

I... I HAD TO WORK! BUT IT'S YOUR SON'S FAULT. HE MUST HAVE LEFT IT LOOSE!
JOSEF TIED IT WELL ENOUGH. I CHECKED.
HMM... WILL YOUR KID BE STAYING LONG?
A FEW DAYS, I SHOULD THINK. LONG ENOUGH TO MEND YOUR TRACTOR.

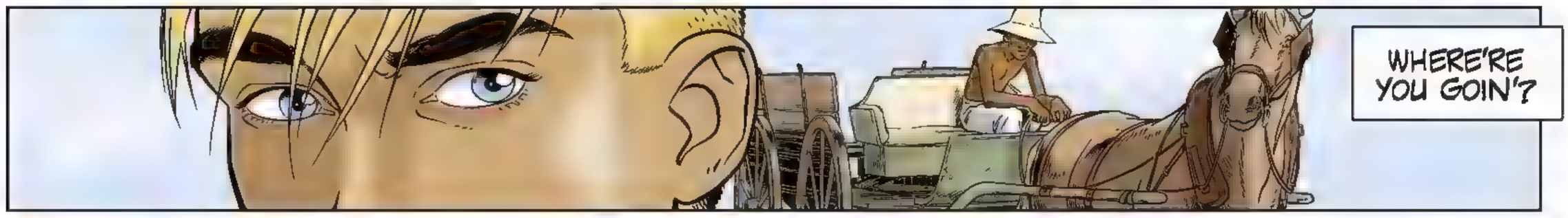

YEAH... IF HE CAN.
SILKE! WHERE ARE YOU? WHY DIDN'T YOU COME OUT TO GREET US?


I HAVE A FEELING THAT KLAUS ISN'T LOOKING FORWARD TO YOUR STAY. HE CAN'T BEAR THE THOUGHT THAT YOU MIGHT SUCCEED.
I HAVE THE SAME FEELING, FATHER.

JOSEF, I'M COUNTING ON YOU TO TEACH THAT INGRATE A LESSON. I'VE SEEN YOU WORK ON ENGINES. YOU'RE SKILLFUL AND CONSCIENTIOUS.
SO I WANT YOU TO REPAIR THAT WRETCHED TRACTOR, OK?

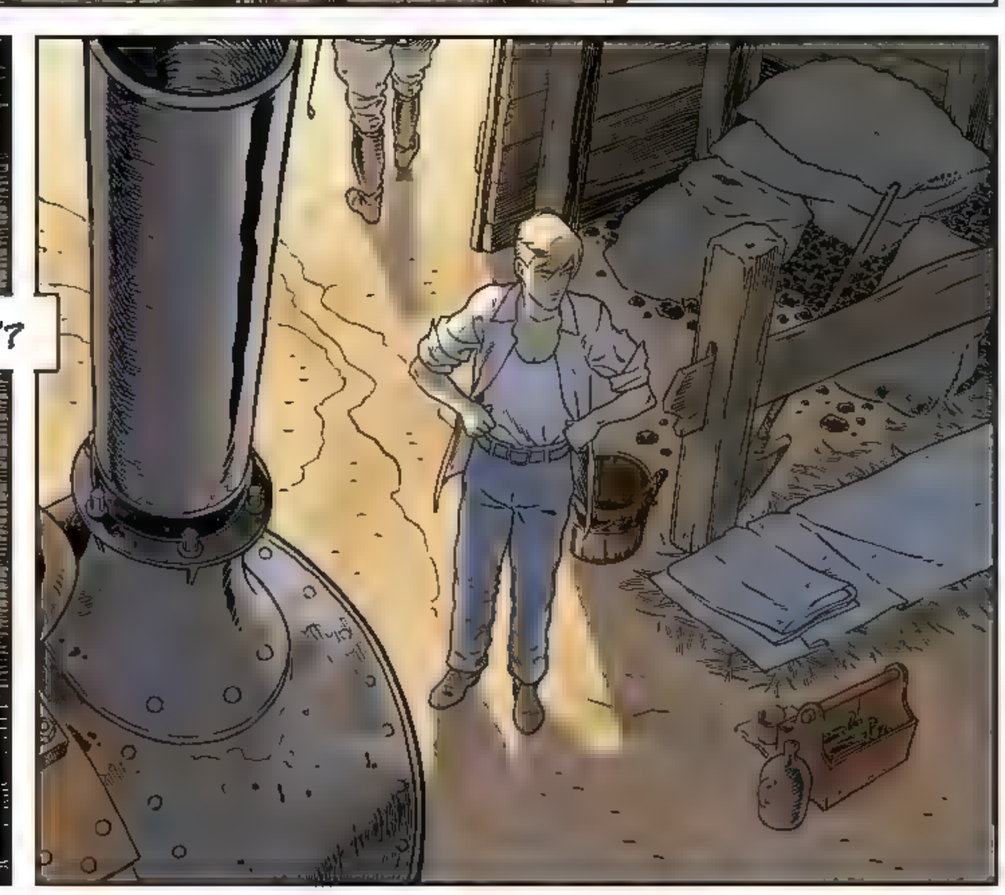

THANK YOU FOR TRUSTING ME, FATHER. I WON'T LET YOU DOWN.
TREU TREU TVRRRRR
I PROMISE I WON'T!
IT WAS A THOUGHTLESS PROMISE. NEITHER OF US HAD ANY IDEA OF THE REAL REASON FOR KLAUS'S BITTERNESS.

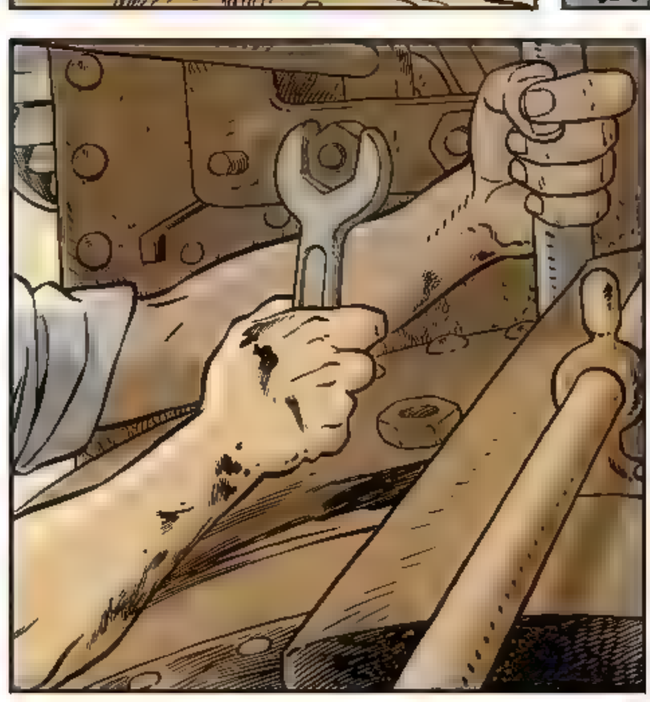
I CERTAINLY DIDN'T... BUT MY WHOLE LIFE WAS ABOUT TO CHANGE DIRECTION...

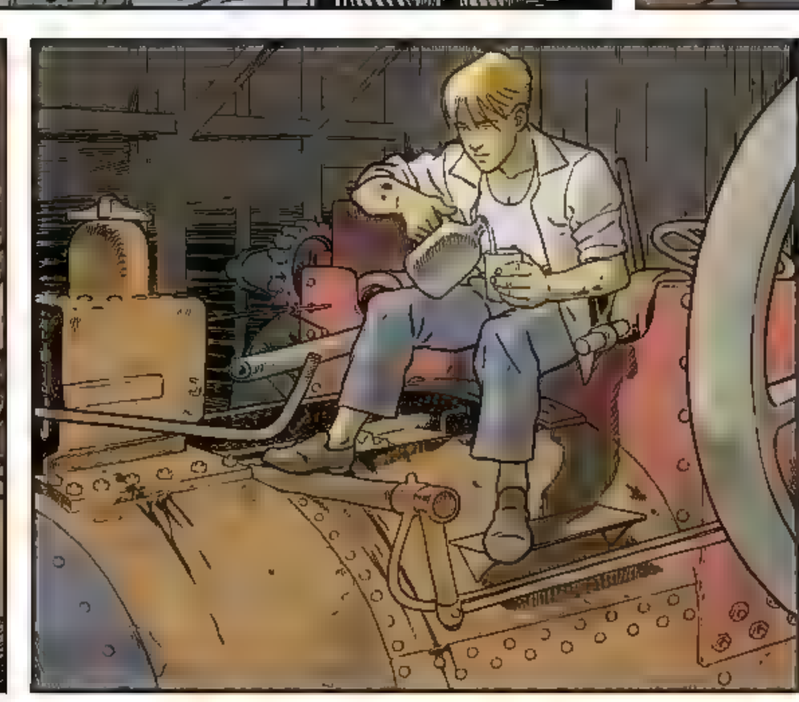

WHERE'RE YOU GOIN'?

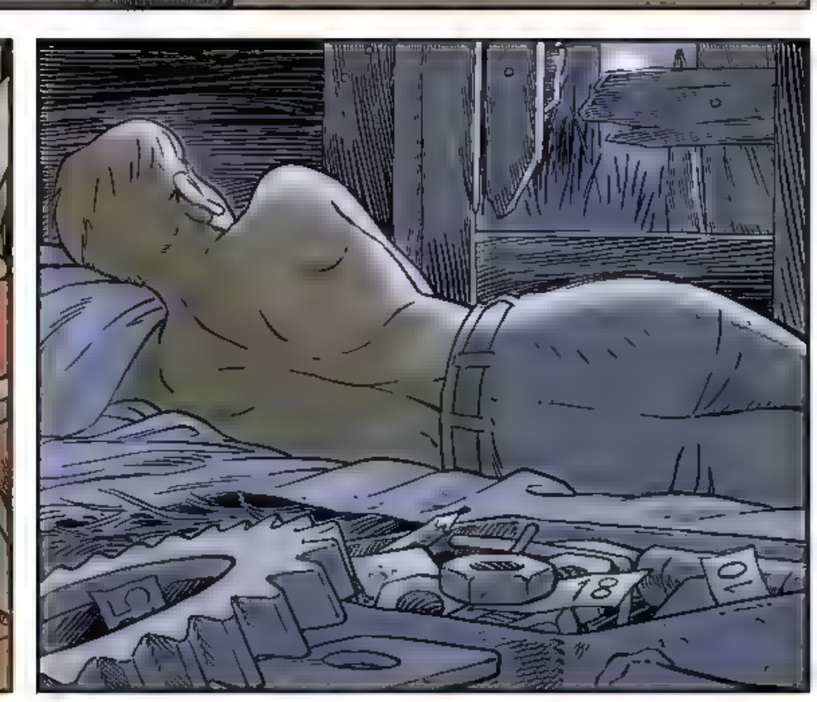
WELL... UH... I... I WANTED TO SEE--
THE BARN'S OVER THERE! AND YOU HAVE A JOB TO DO!

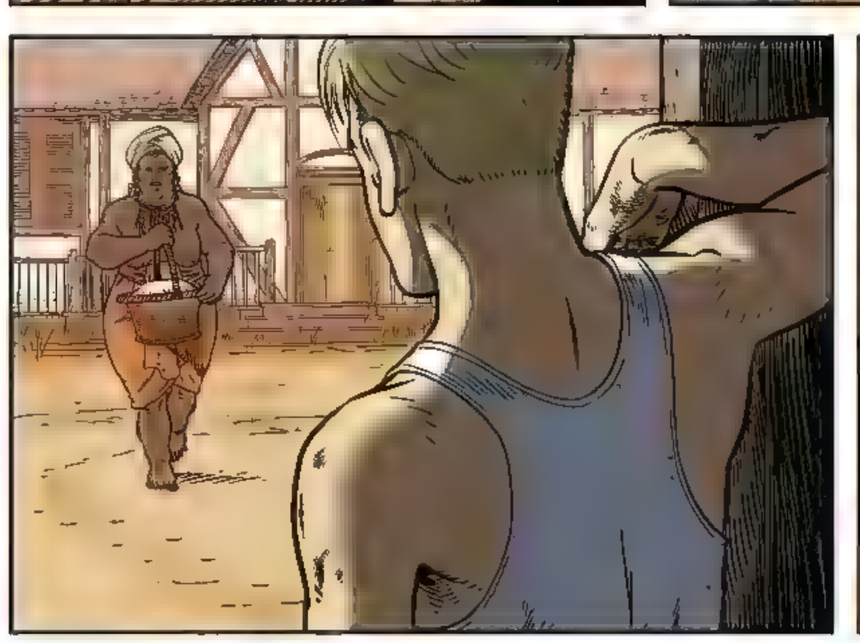
"KID"?
YOU MIGHT BE THE PASTOR'S SON, KID, BUT YOU'RE NOT WELCOME UP AT THE HOUSE. YOU'RE TO EAT AND SLEEP OUT HERE.

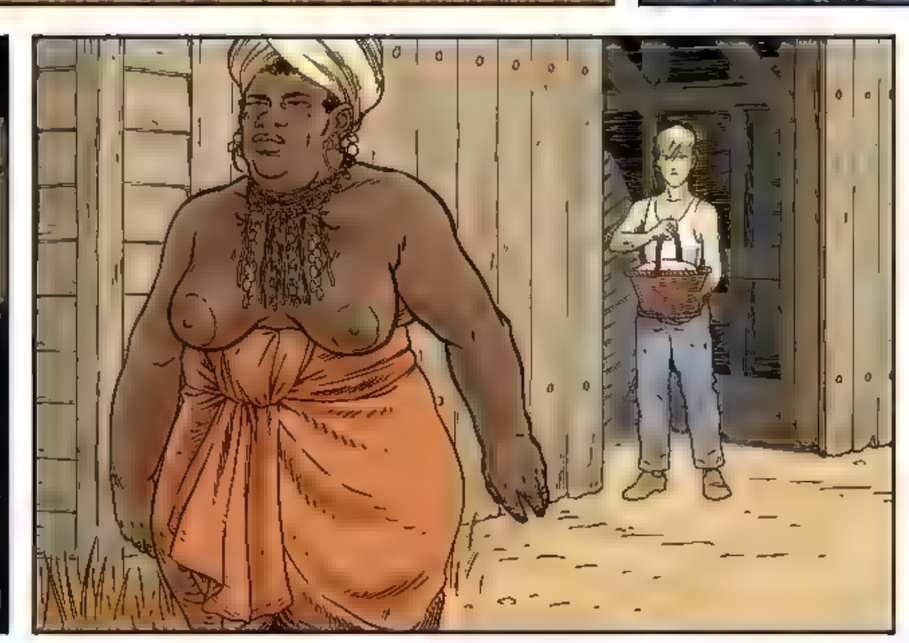


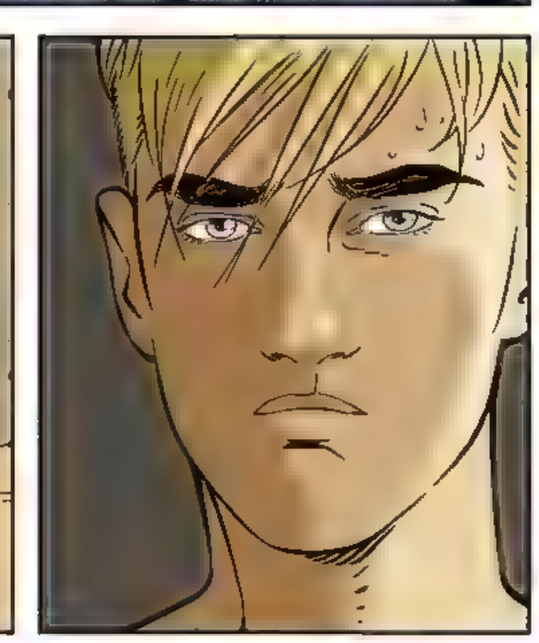


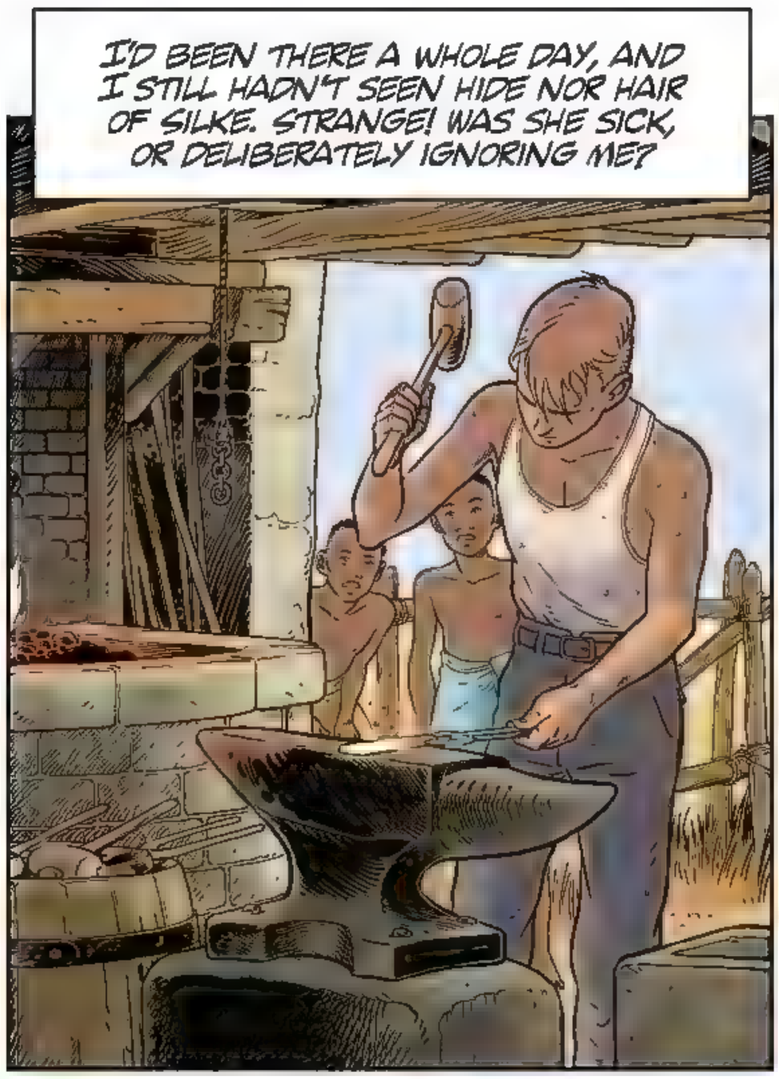


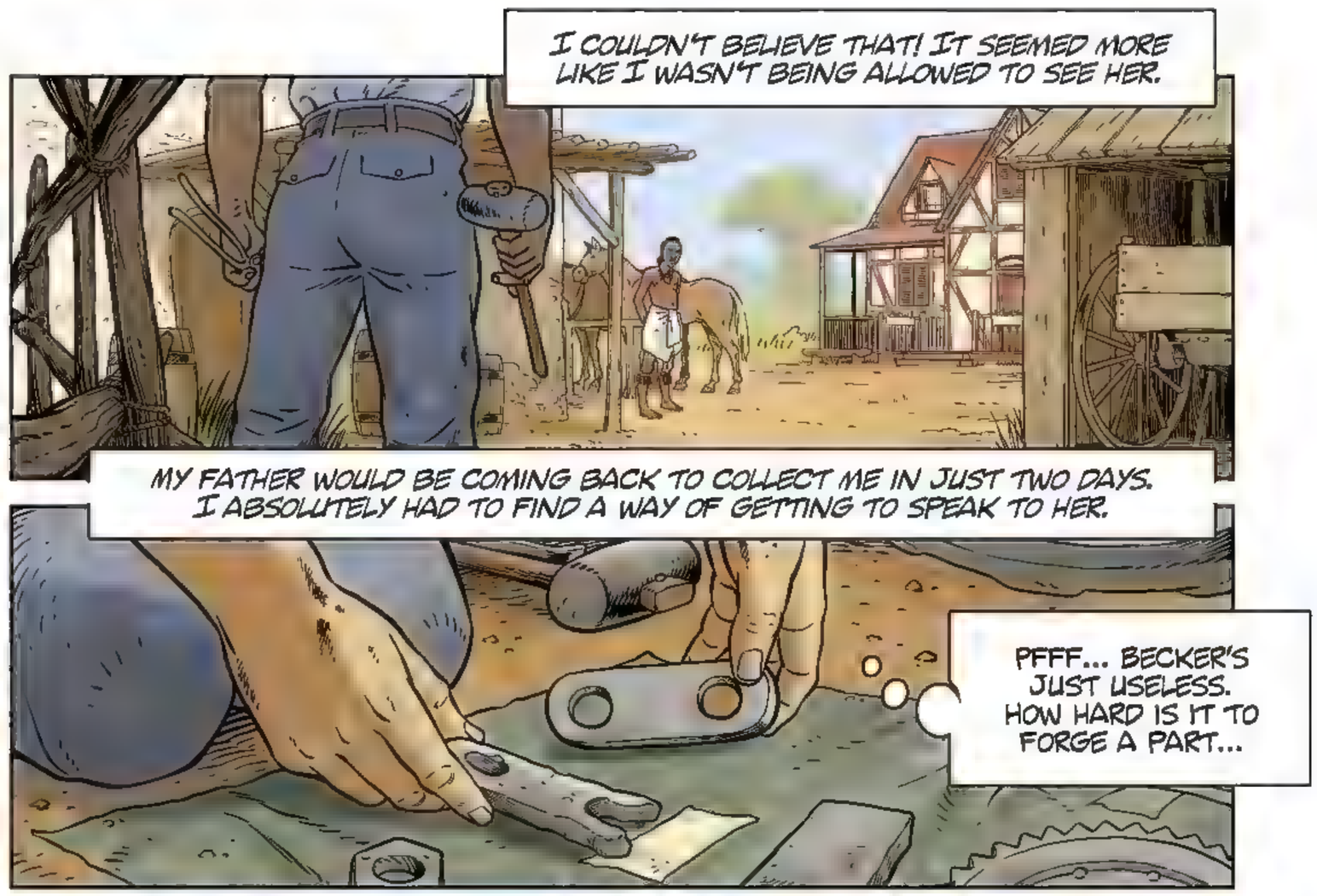


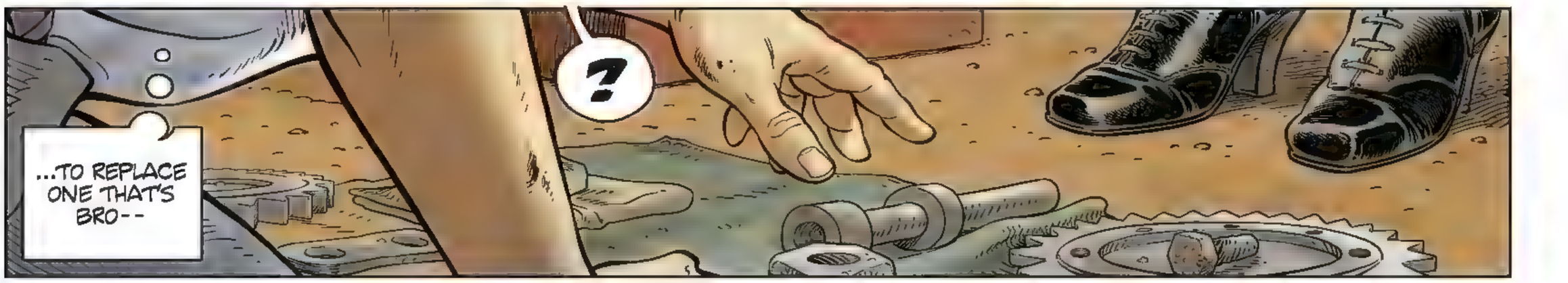


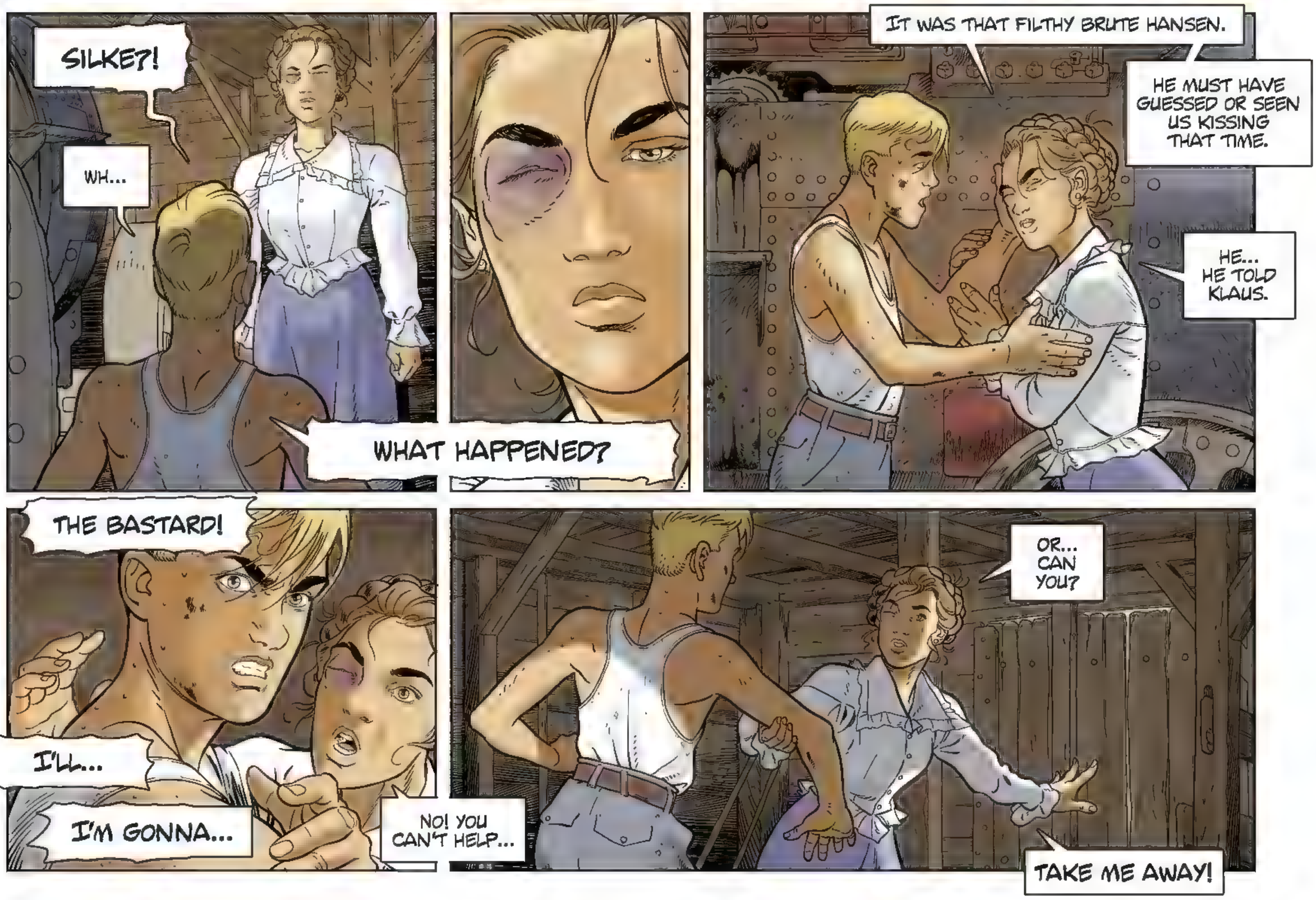




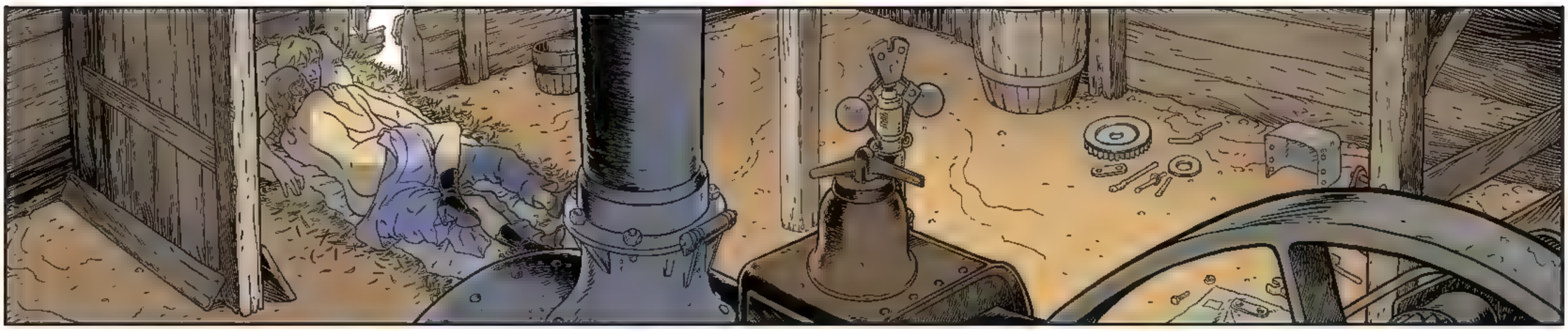

I'D BEEN THERE A WHOLE DAY, AND I STILL HADN'T SEEN HIDE NOR HAIR OF SILKE. STRANGE! WAS SHE SICK, OR DELIBERATELY IGNORING ME?

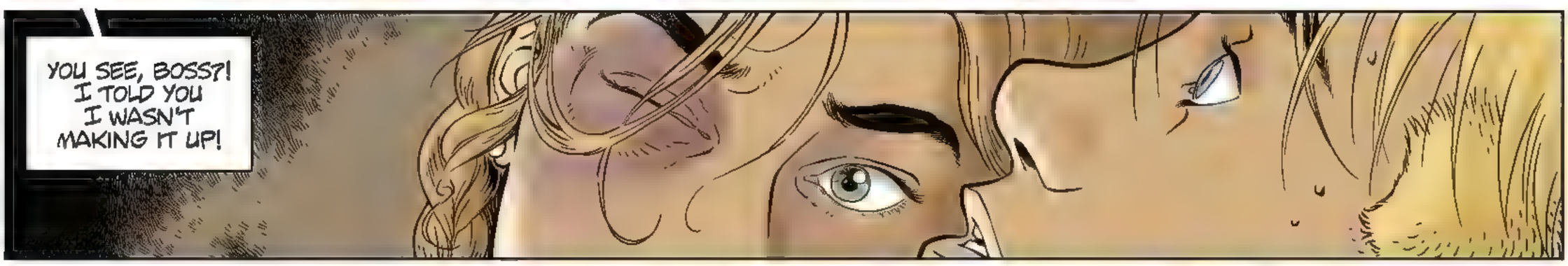

I COULDN'T BELIEVE THAT! IT SEEMED MORE LIKE I WASN'T BEING ALLOWED TO SEE HER.
MY FATHER WOULD BE COMING BACK TO COLLECT ME IN JUST TWO DAYS. I ABSOLUTELY HAD TO FIND A WAY OF GETTING TO SPEAK TO HER.
PFFF... BECKER'S JUST USELESS. HOW HARD IS IT TO FORGE A PART...


...TO REPLACE ONE THAT'S BRO--
?


SILKE?!
WH...
WHAT HAPPENED?
IT WAS THAT FILTHY BRUTE HANSEN.
HE MUST HAVE GUESSED OR SEEN US KISSING THAT TIME.
HE... HE TOLD KLAUS.
THE BASTARD!
I'LL...
I'M GONNA...
NO! YOU CAN'T HELP...
OR... CAN YOU?
TAKE ME AWAY!

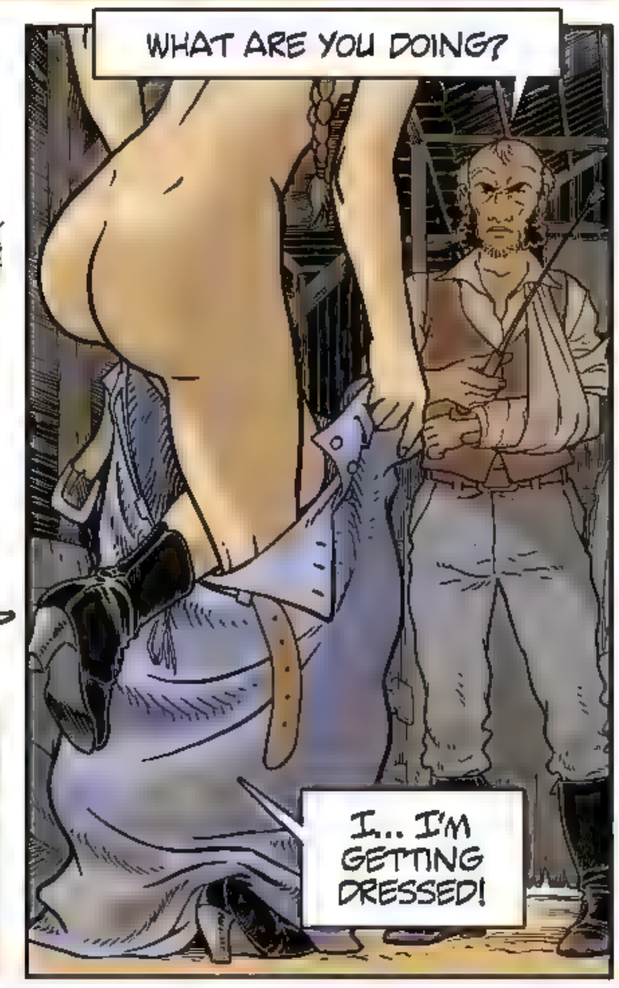
(1) A FORMER BRITISH COLONY, NOW KENYA.

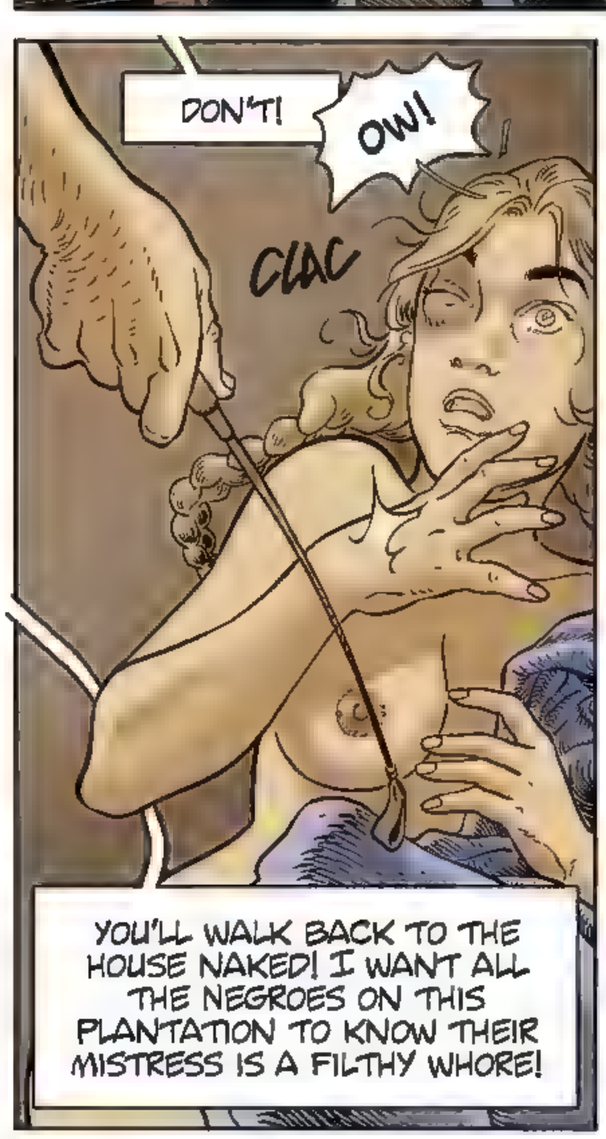


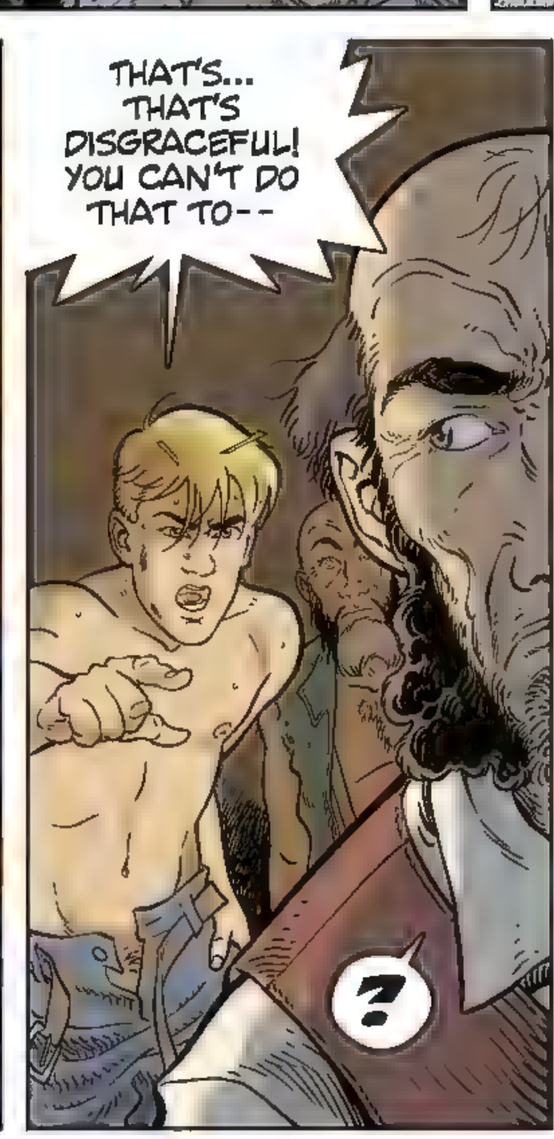

YOU SEE, BOSS?! I TOLD YOU I WASN'T MAKING IT UP!

KLAUS!!
?

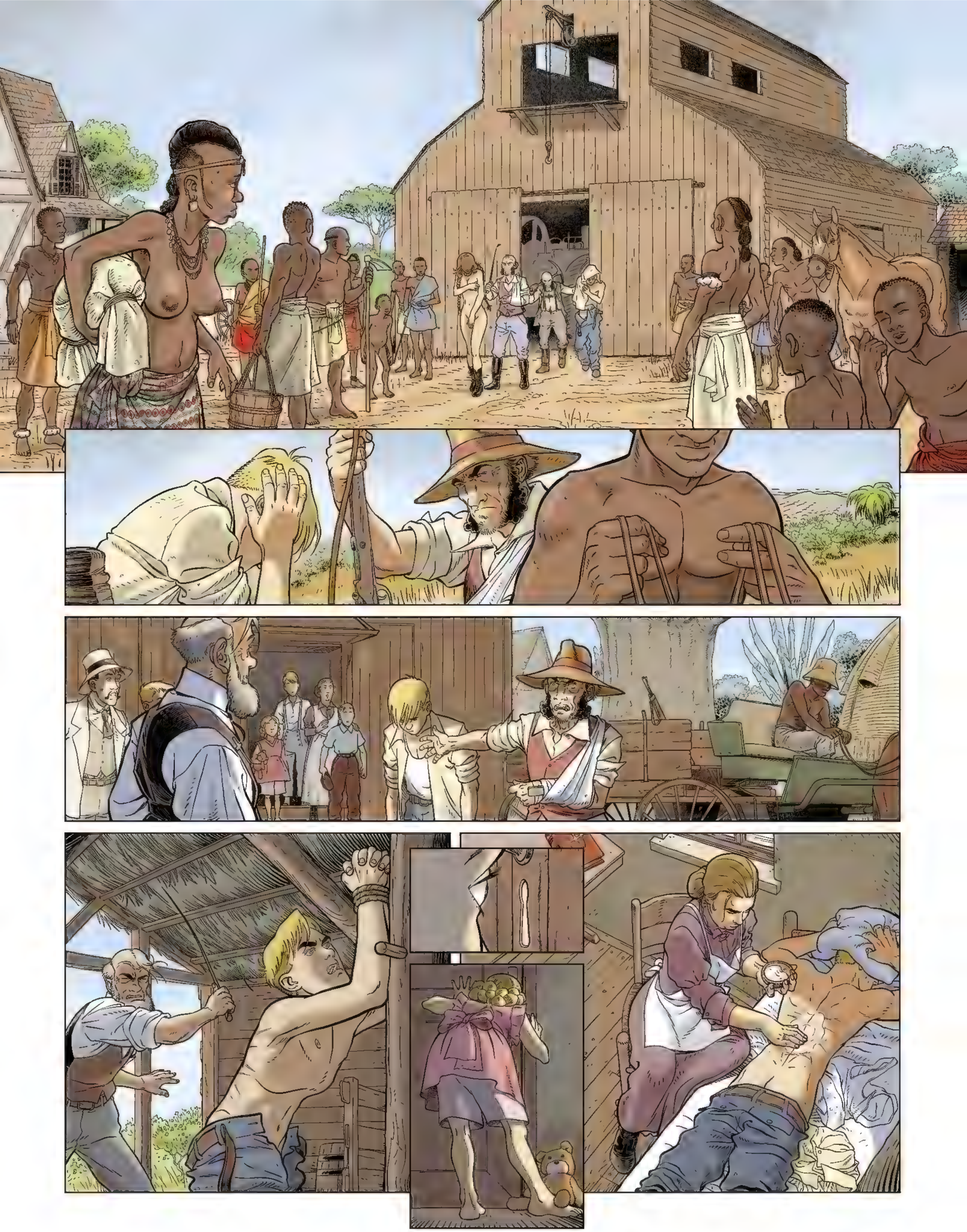
YES, SILKE, MY DEAR! THAT STORY ABOUT THE WORKERS FIGHTING WAS JUST A TRAP, AND YOU BOTH FELL RIGHT INTO IT!

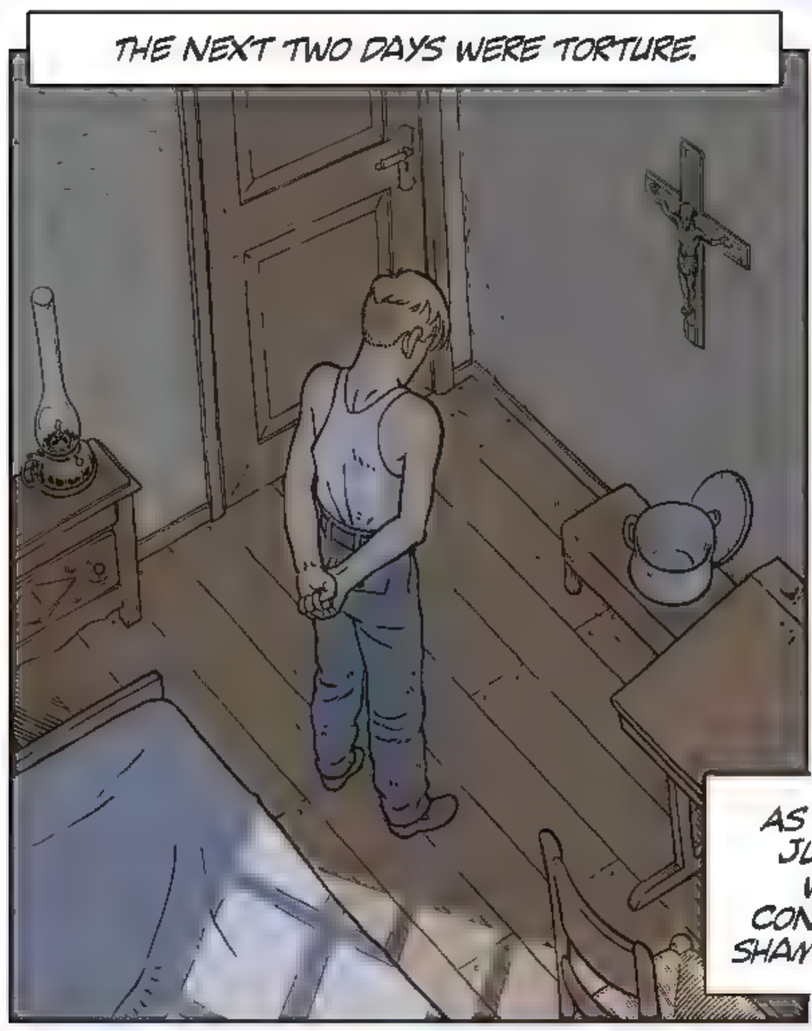

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I... I'M GETTING DRESSED!


DON'T!
OW!
CLAC
YOU'LL WALK BACK TO THE HOUSE NAKED! I WANT ALL THE NEGROES ON THIS PLANTATION TO KNOW THEIR MISTRESS IS A FILTHY WHORE!

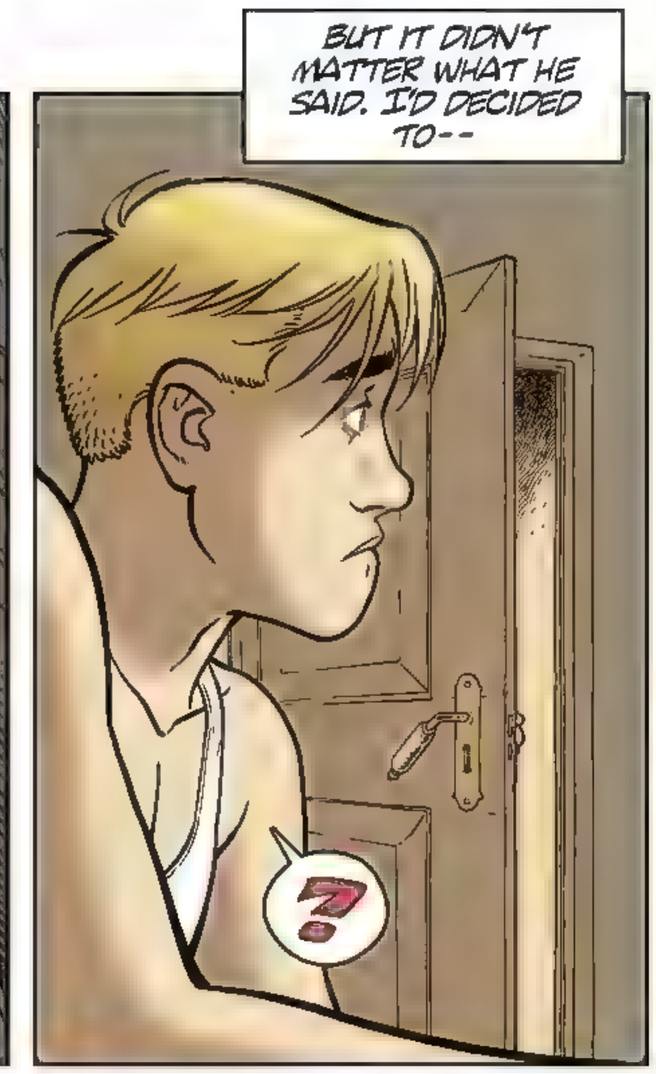

THAT'S... THAT'S DISGRACEFUL! YOU CAN'T DO THAT TO--
?

ARGH!
BUT IT WAS OK FOR YOU TO SCREW MY WIFE, WAS IT, YOU LITTLE RUNT?!
AAAAAH... AAAAAH...

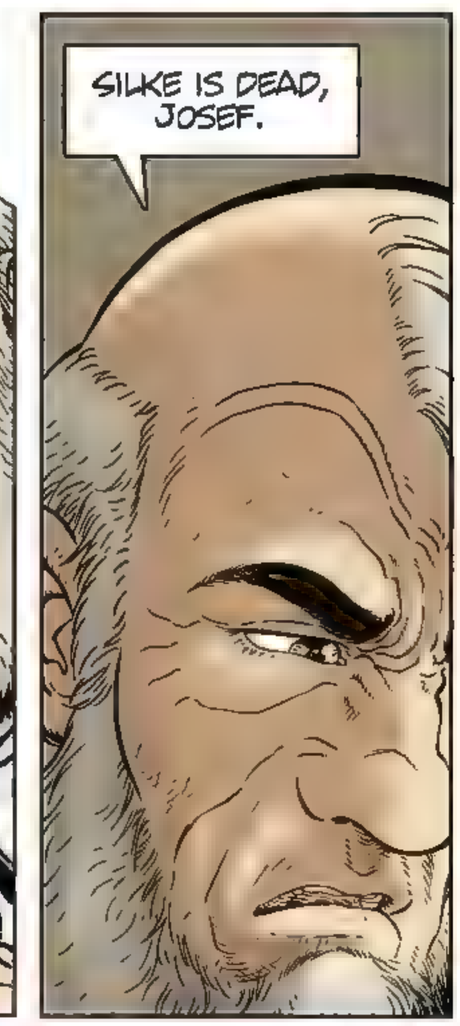



THE NEXT TWO DAYS WERE TORTURE.

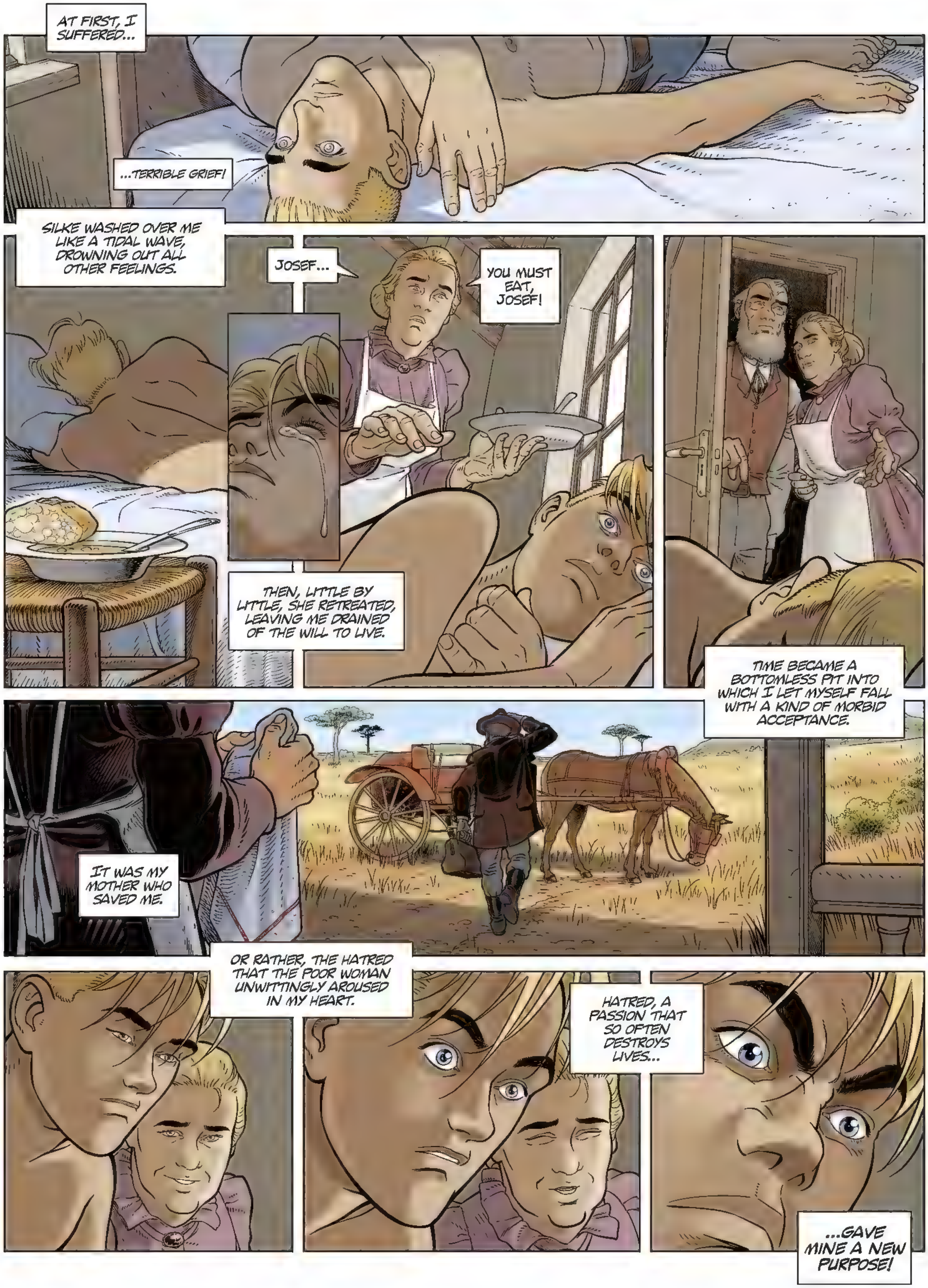
AS I AWAITED MY FATHER'S JUDGMENT, MY FEELINGS WERE CONFUSING AND CONTRADICTORY--PRIDE AND SHAME, REMORSE AND ANGER...

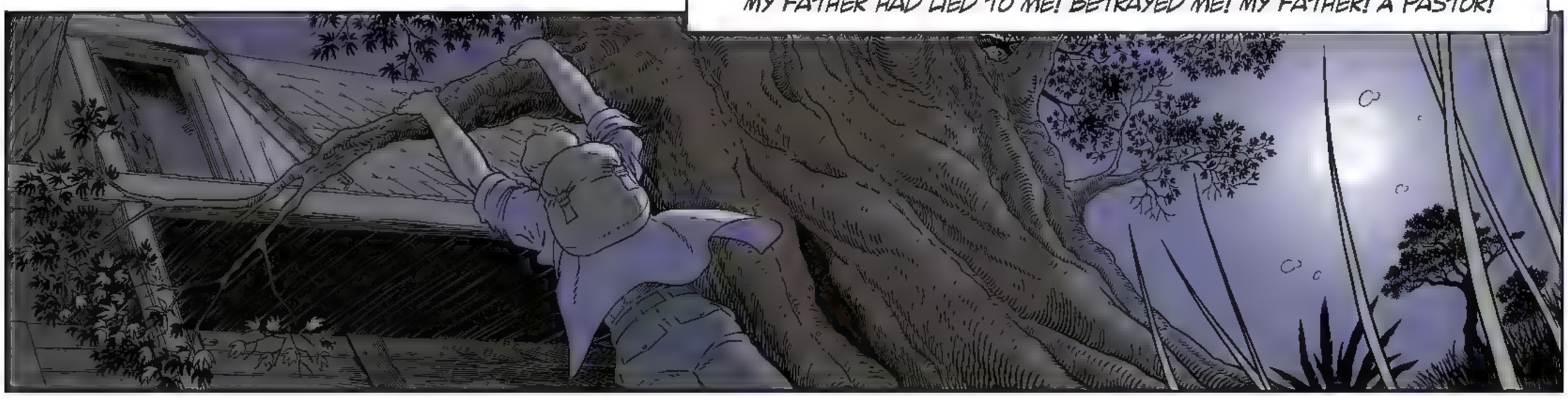

BUT IT DIDN'T MATTER WHAT HE SAID. I'D DECIDED TO--
?

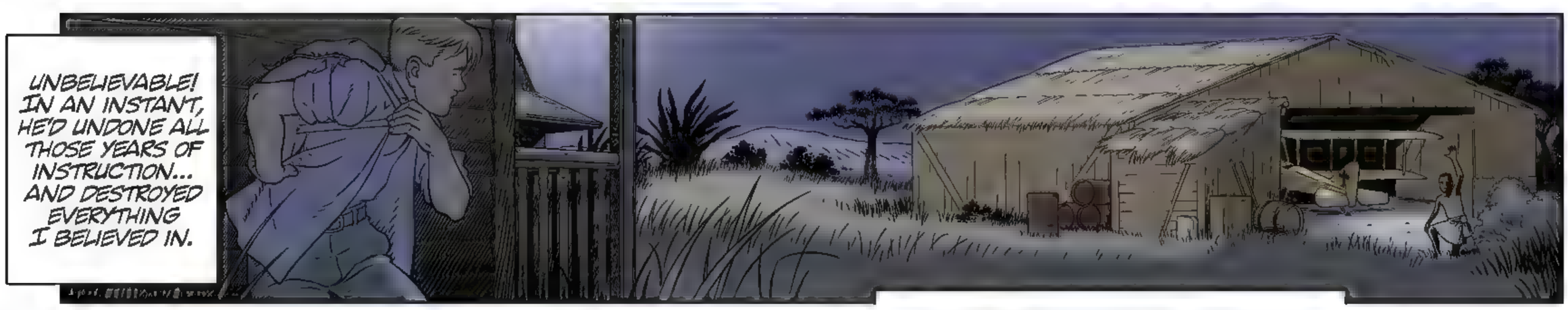
JOSEF, I...
UH...
?

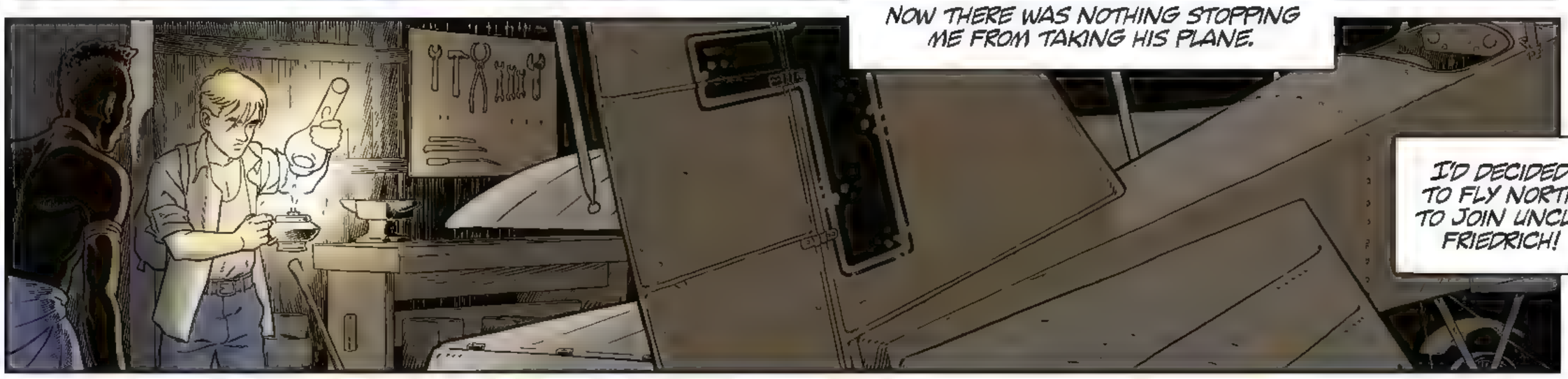

SILKE IS DEAD, JOSEF.

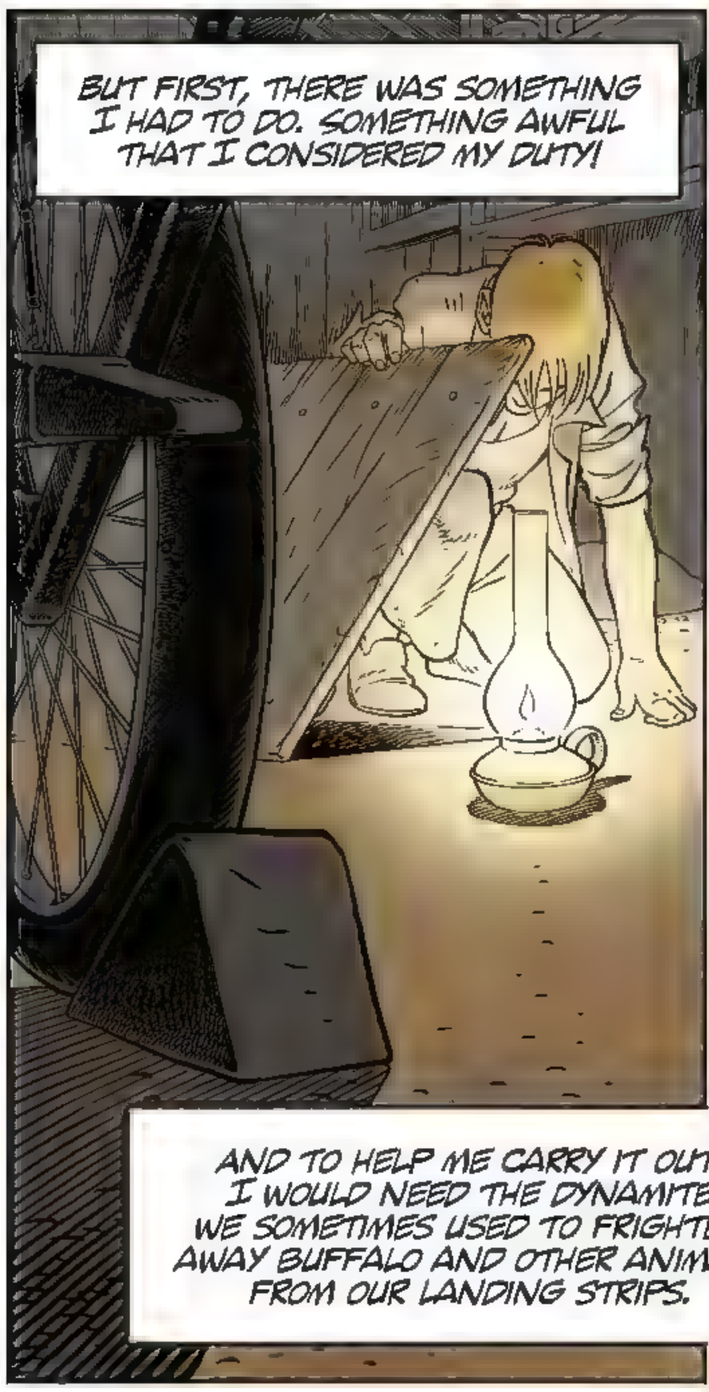
SHE KILLED HERSELF!
SHE KILLED HERSELF!
KILLED HERSELF!
KILLED HERSELF
...LET YOU OUT OF HERE FOR ONE HOUR A DAY...
YOU MUST TAKE SOME OF THE BLAME FOR THIS TRAGEDY...
REPENT! PRAY FOR HER SOUL!
DEAD
HERSELF
...SENDING YOU TO GERMANY AS SOON AS...

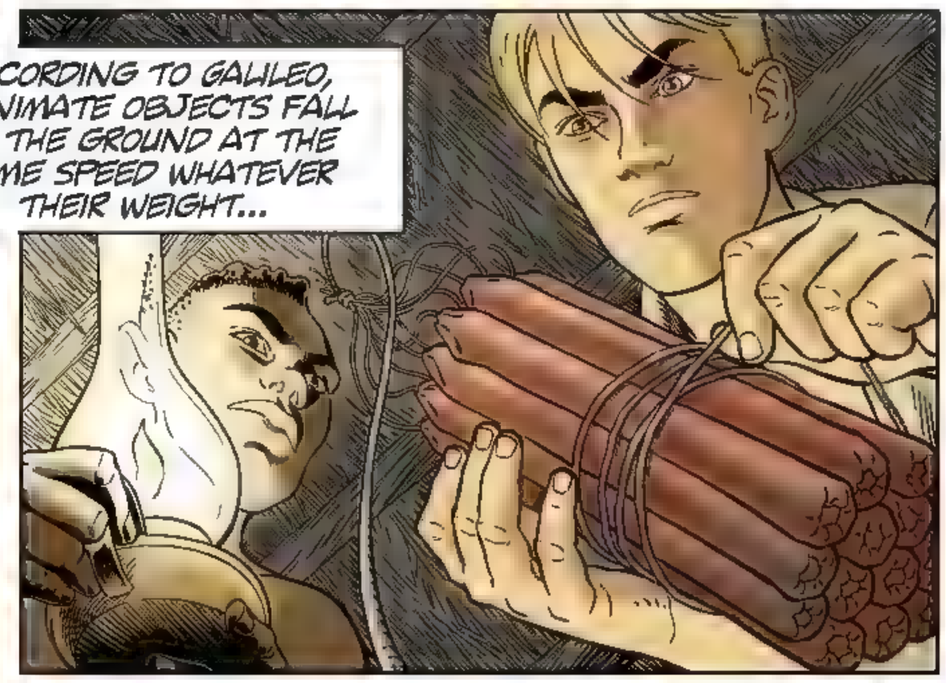

AT FIRST, I SUFFERED...
...TERRIBLE GRIEF!
SILKE WASHED OVER ME LIKE A TIDAL WAVE, DROWNING OUT ALL OTHER FEELINGS.
JOSEF...
YOU MUST EAT, JOSEF!
THEN, LITTLE BY LITTLE, SHE RETREATED, LEAVING ME DRAINED OF THE WILL TO LIVE.
TIME BECAME A BOTTOMLESS PIT INTO WHICH I LET MYSELF FALL WITH A KIND OF MORBID ACCEPTANCE.
IT WAS MY MOTHER WHO SAVED ME.
OR RATHER, THE HATRED THAT THE POOR WOMAN UNWITTINGLY AROUSED IN MY HEART.
HATRED, A PASSION THAT SO OFTEN DESTROYS LIVES...
...GAVE MINE A NEW PURPOSE!

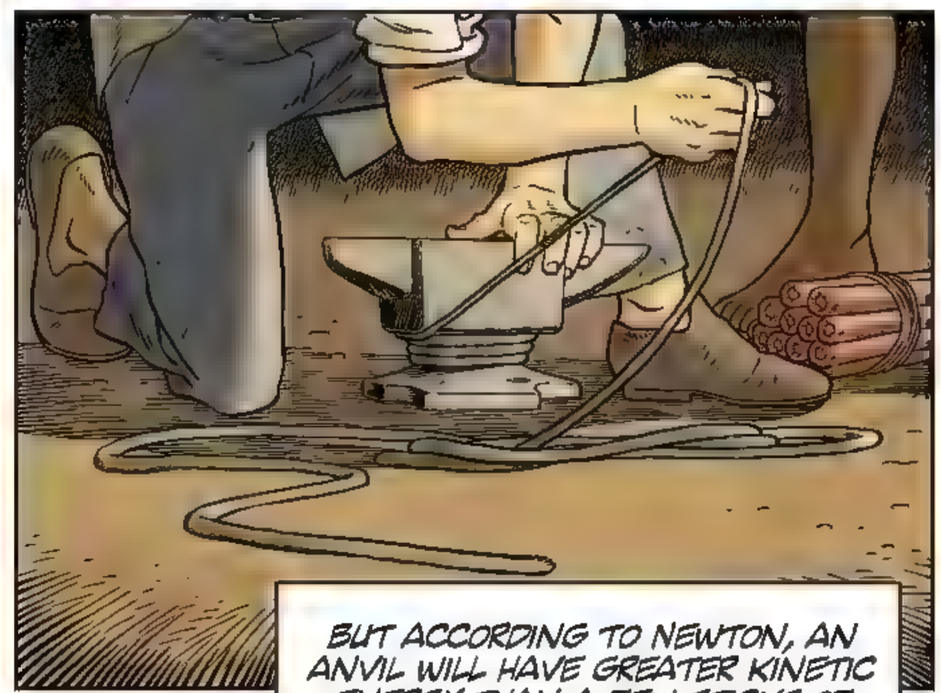




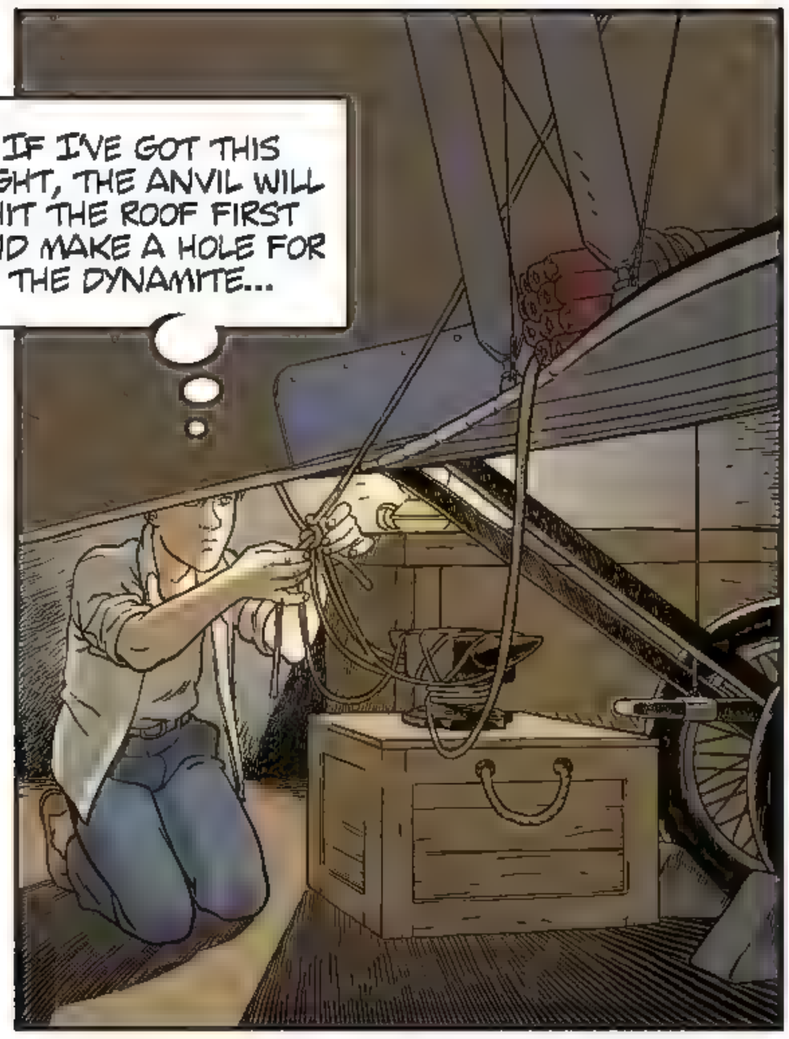


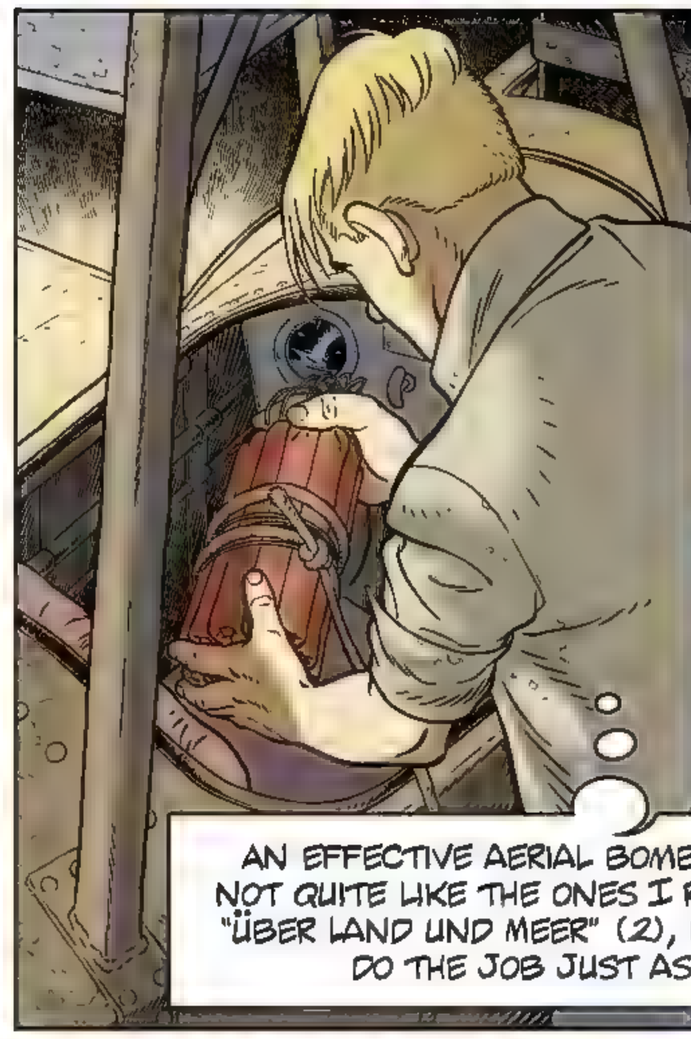


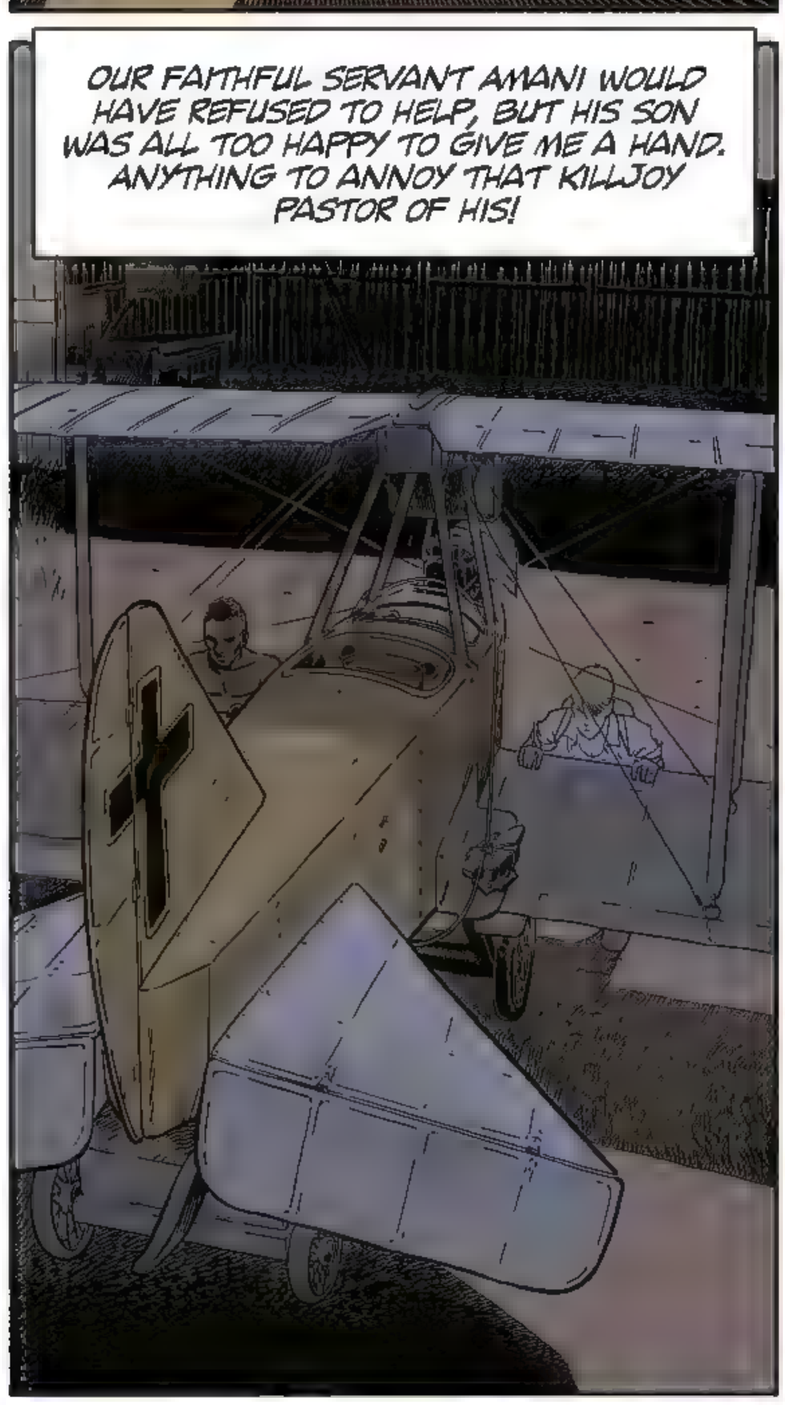


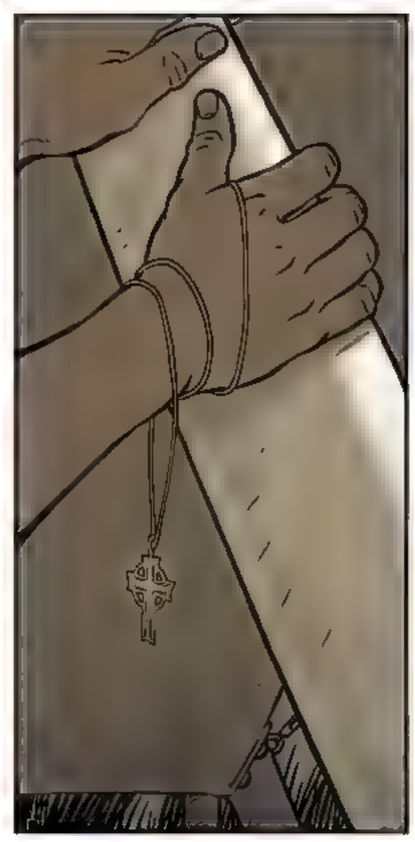


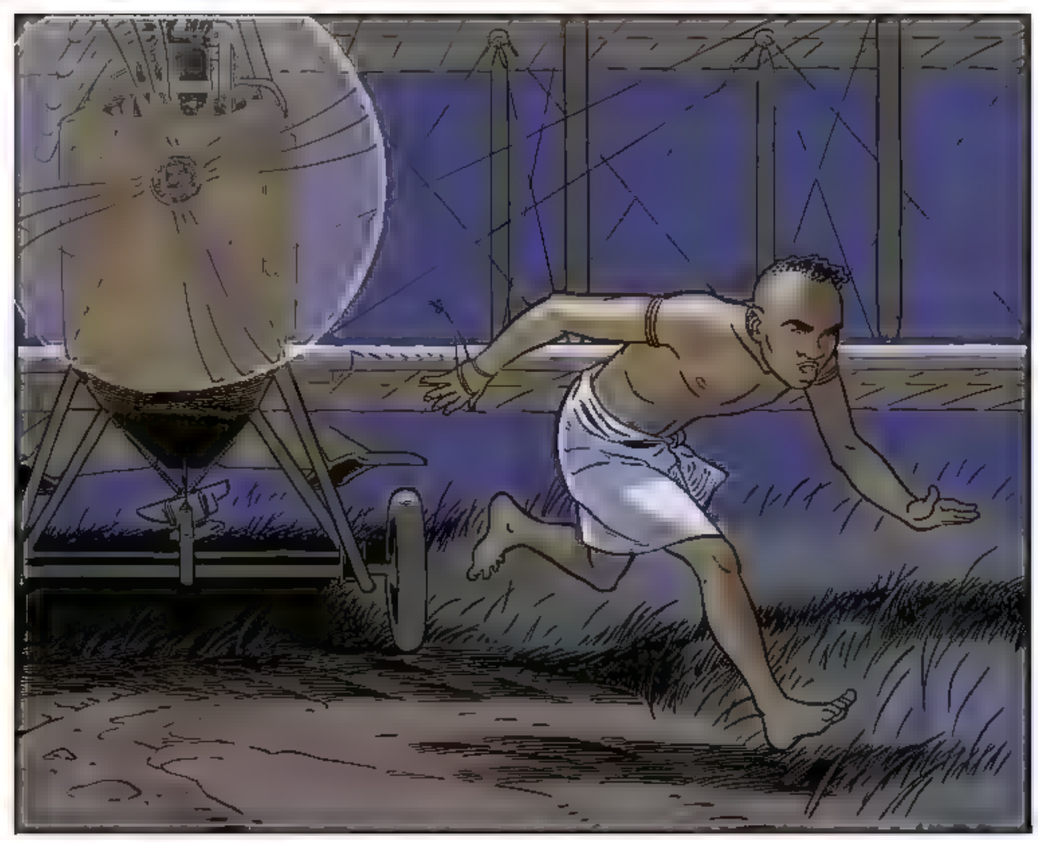
(1) $E = \frac{1}{2}MV^2$ (E: ENERGY; M: MASS; V: VELOCITY).

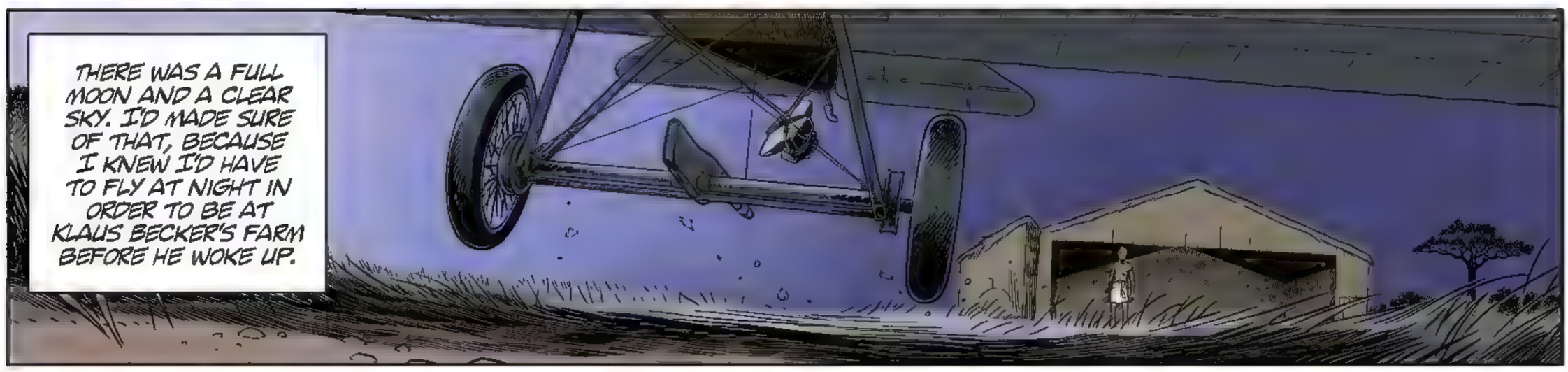












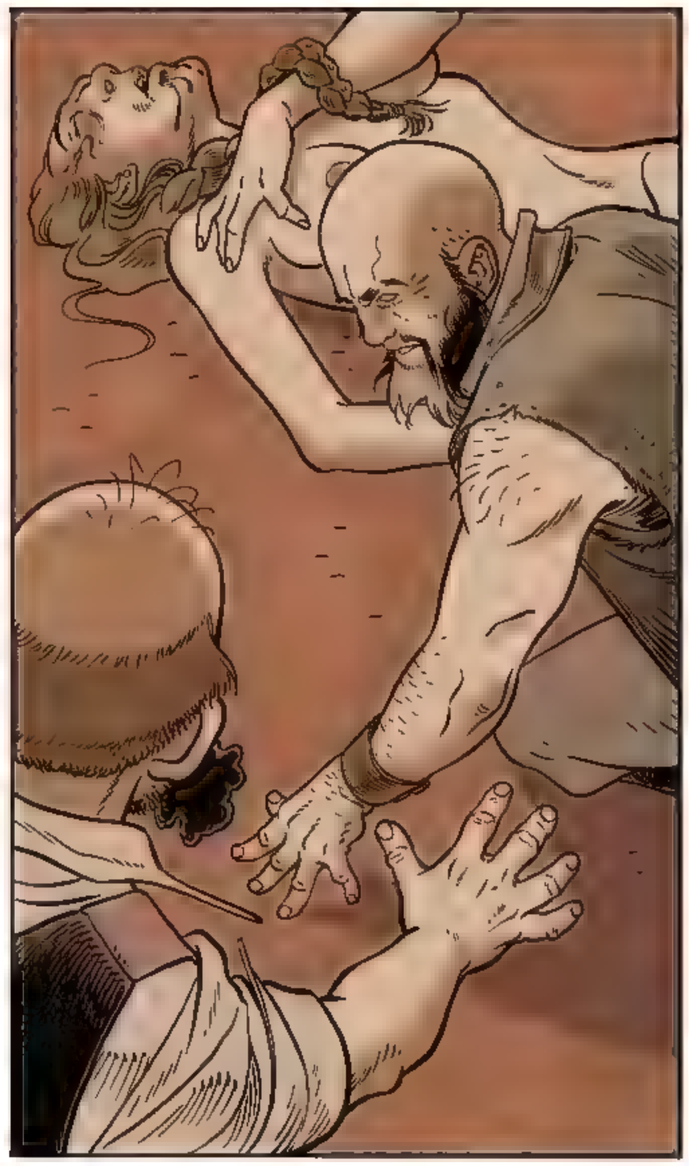
(1) THE TERM "AERIAL BOMB" WAS COINED DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR. LATER, EXPLOSIVES DROPPED FROM AIRPLANES WERE SIMPLY CALLED "BOMBS."

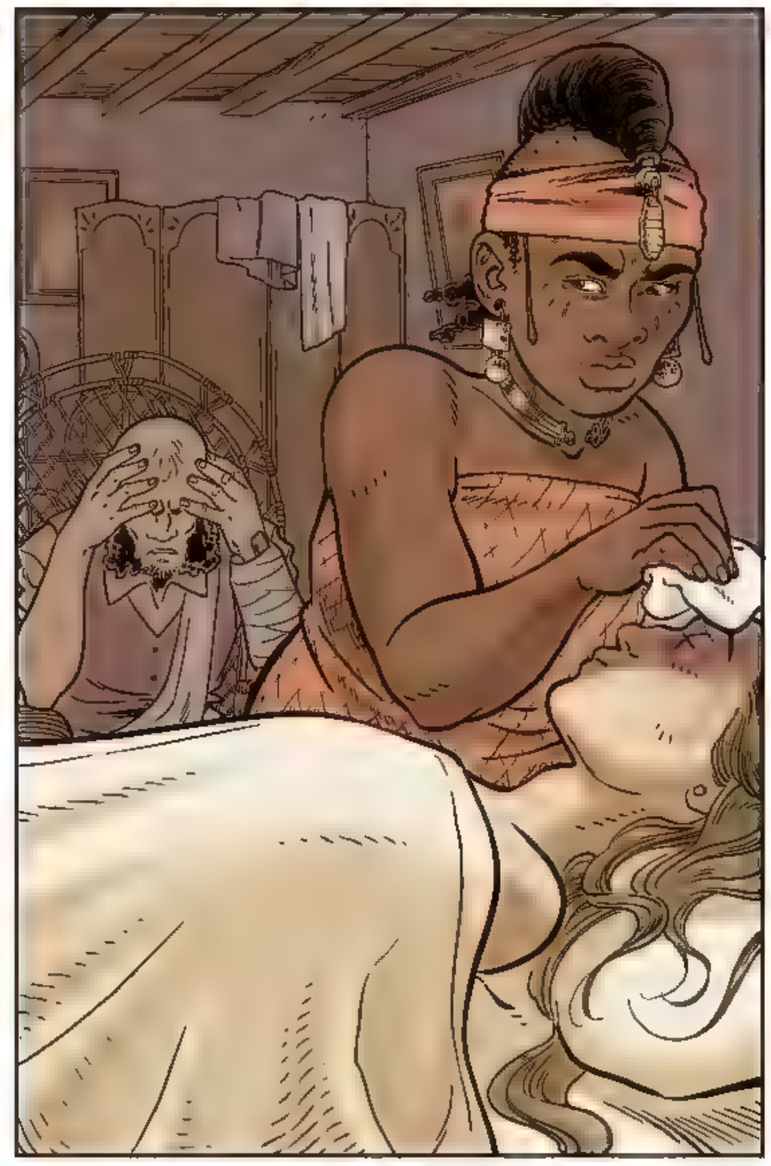
(2) A MAGAZINE PUBLISHED IN STUTTGART BETWEEN 1885 AND 1923 THAT WAS FILLED WITH STORIES OF ADVENTURE AND EXPLORATION.

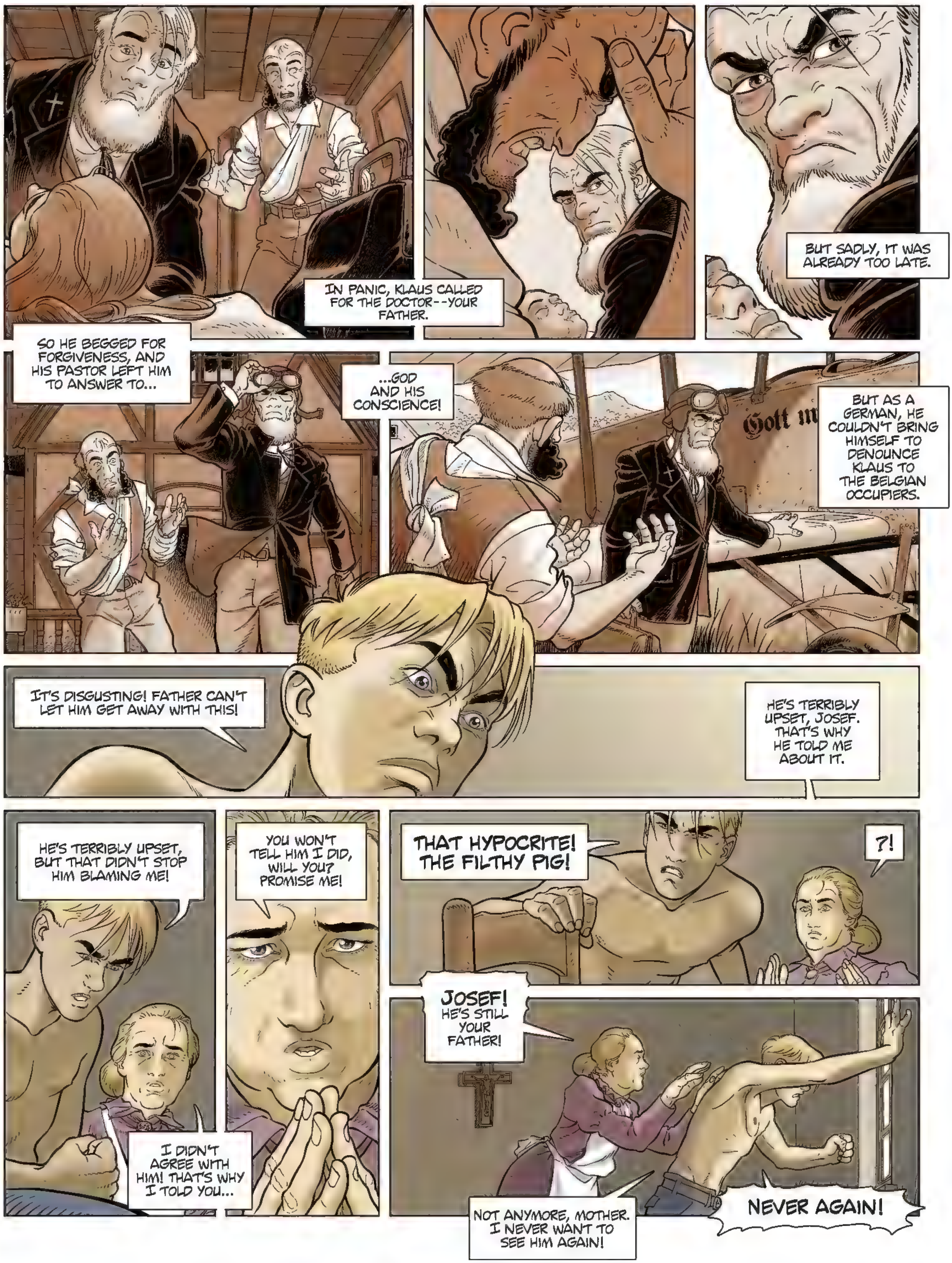
WHEN I'D STAYED THERE, I'D FOUND OUT THAT NONE OF THE SERVANTS SLEPT IN THE FARMHOUSE. SINCE SILKE WAS GONE, THE ONLY ONES INSIDE AT THAT TIME OF THE MORNING WOULD BE KLAUS AND HIS SADISTIC FOREMAN.

BIG CATS ALWAYS HUNT AT NIGHT.

NOW I WAS LIKE THEM--AND THANKS TO THOSE TWO BASTARDS, I WAS NO LONGER A CUB.






IN PANIC, KLAUS CALLED FOR THE DOCTOR--YOUR FATHER.
BUT SADLY, IT WAS ALREADY TOO LATE.
SO HE BEGGED FOR FORGIVENESS, AND HIS PASTOR LEFT HIM TO ANSWER TO...
...GOD AND HIS CONSCIENCE!
BUT AS A GERMAN, HE COULDN'T BRING HIMSELF TO DENOUNCE KLAUS TO THE BELGIAN OCCUPIERS.
IT'S DISGUSTING! FATHER CAN'T LET HIM GET AWAY WITH THIS!
HE'S TERRIBLY UPSET, JOSEF. THAT'S WHY HE TOLD ME ABOUT IT.
HE'S TERRIBLY UPSET, BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP HIM BLAMING ME!
YOU WON'T TELL HIM I DID, WILL YOU? PROMISE ME!
I DIDN'T AGREE WITH HIM! THAT'S WHY I TOLD YOU...
THAT HYPOCRITE! THE FILTHY PIG!
?!
JOSEF! HE'S STILL YOUR FATHER!
NOT ANYMORE, MOTHER. I NEVER WANT TO SEE HIM AGAIN!
NEVER AGAIN!

THE DAY OF RECKONING HAD FINALLY DAWNED, AND EVEN IF I'D BEEN THREATENED WITH ETERNAL DAMNATION, NOTHING COULD HAVE STOPPED ME FROM DOING WHAT I BELIEVED TO BE RIGHT!

I DIDN'T REALIZE THEN THAT BEING RIGHT DOESN'T ENTITLE YOU TO METE OUT JUSTICE. BUT WHAT REALLY SHOULD HAVE GIVEN ME PAUSE...

...WAS THE THIRST FOR BLOOD THAT TOOK ME OVER AS I DOVE THE PLANE TOWARD ITS TARGET.

CRRAHACK

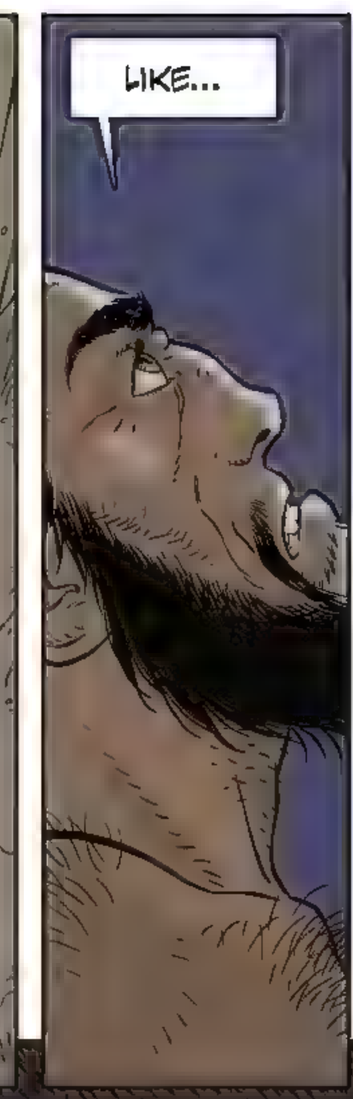
KRAAK

BLAAANG

BOUM

?!

IS THAT IT?



BAOUM

?!

MR. BECKER...

YEAAAAAAAH!
THE PASTOR'S PLANE?!
?
HAA... AHHH...
QUIT WHINING, YOU STUPID WHORE! YOU'RE FINE.
GET BACK HOME! NOW!
YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS, YOU BASTARD, WHOEVER YOU ARE!
INCREDIBLE! I'D PULLED OFF THE FIRST BOMBING RAID OF MY CAREER, WHICH I NOW SAW STRETCHING GLORIOUSLY BEFORE ME--MY FIRST HEADY TASTE OF BATTLE.
DISAPPOINTINGLY, IT DIDN'T LAST LONG...
...SOON GIVING WAY TO THE BITTER REALIZATION THAT NO BOMB COULD BRING BACK THE WOMAN I LOVED.
IN FACT, AS I FLEW FROM THE SCENE OF MY RETRIBUTION, SILKE SEEMED TO SLIP FURTHER AWAY...
...AS IF MY HATRED FOR HER MURDERERS HAD REAWAKENED HER MEMORY... AND BY KILLING THEM, I'D MADE HER DIE A SECOND TIME.

LOOKING DOWN ON THE MAGNIFICENT PLAINS WHERE I'D SPENT MY YOUTH, I ALSO REALIZED THAT IT, TOO, HAD COME TO AN END.

IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR MY URGENT NEED TO FIND MY UNCLE FRIEDRICH, I'D PROBABLY HAVE BURST INTO TEARS LIKE A KID ONE LAST TIME.

YOU CAN ONLY FLY 185 MORE MILES, JOSEF, SO THINK FAST AND THINK STRAIGHT!

Gott mit uns

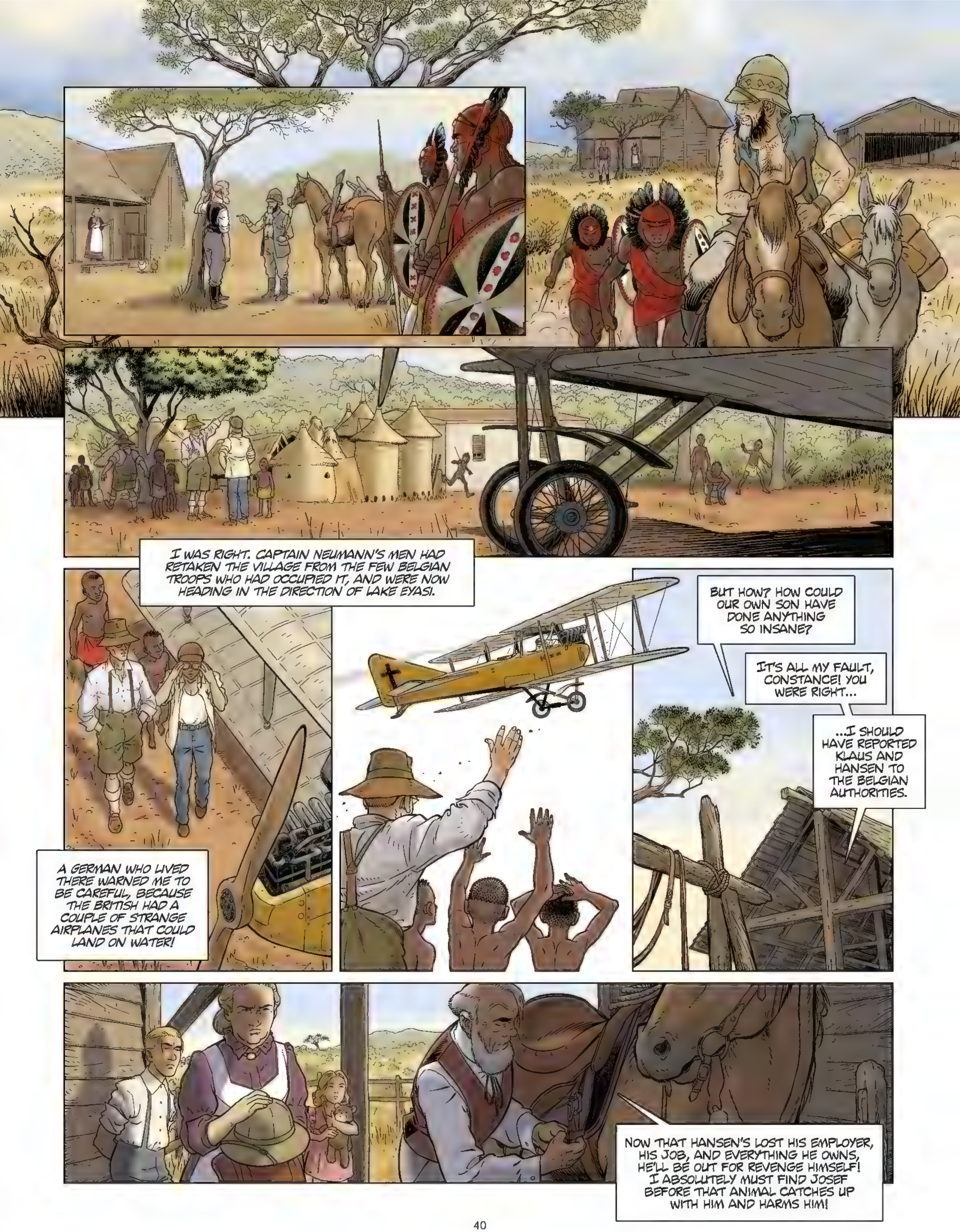
OUR ARMY IS ADVANCING TOWARD MOSHI...

THEY COULDN'T HAVE BEEN FAR FROM TABORA WHEN UNCLE FRIEDRICH CAME TO SEE US AT THE MISSION.

THEY'LL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE HEADING NORTH-EAST BETWEEN LAKE EYASI AND LAKE MANYARA...

I'LL LAND AT MKALAMA. THE VILLAGERS WILL TELL ME IF GERMAN SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN THERE...

...UNLESS THEY'VE ALREADY HEARD WHAT I DID TO THE BECKERS' PLACE!


I WAS RIGHT. CAPTAIN NEUMANN'S MEN HAD RETAKEN THE VILLAGE FROM THE FEW BELGIAN TROOPS WHO HAD OCCUPIED IT, AND WERE NOW HEADING IN THE DIRECTION OF LAKE EYASI.
A GERMAN WHO LIVED THERE WARNED ME TO BE CAREFUL, BECAUSE THE BRITISH HAD A COUPLE OF STRANGE AIRPLANES THAT COULD LAND ON WATER!
BUT HOW? HOW COULD OUR OWN SON HAVE DONE ANYTHING SO INSANE?
IT'S ALL MY FAULT, CONSTANCE! YOU WERE RIGHT...
...I SHOULD HAVE REPORTED KLAUS AND HANSEN TO THE BELGIAN AUTHORITIES.
NOW THAT HANSEN'S LOST HIS EMPLOYER, HIS JOB, AND EVERYTHING HE OWNS, HE'LL BE OUT FOR REVENGE HIMSELF! I ABSOLUTELY MUST FIND JOSEF BEFORE THAT ANIMAL CATCHES UP WITH HIM AND HARMS HIM!

BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE TO LOOK, LOTHAR! HE COULD BE ANYWHERE!
IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS THAT HE'S GOING TO TRY TO FIND FRIEDRICH.
HE ADMIRES HIM, AND WANTS TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUPID WAR... WITH MY AIRPLANE!
AN ARMY IS HARDLY INVISIBLE, MY DEAR CONSTANCE. I WON'T HAVE ANY PROBLEM FINDING IT.
DID YOU PACK EVERYTHING WE NEED, FRITZ?
YES, PASTOR, SIR. CARTRIDGES AND ENOUGH FOOD FOR TEN DAYS.
THEN LET'S GO!
BRING OUR SON HOME SAFE, LOTHAR! I BEG YOU!
HAHA! SO I WAS RIGHT!
THE PASTOR KNOWS WHERE HIS BRAT'S HIDING...
I JUST HAVE TO FOLLOW HIM.
KOUSSÉ! THE WHITE MAN'S ON HIS WAY!
YOU'RE TO FOLLOW HIM AT A SAFE DISTANCE, LEAVING MARKERS BEHIND YOU, LIKE WE SAID. I'LL KEEP WELL BACK, SO HE DOESN'T HEAR MY HORSES.
UNDERSTAND, KOUSSÉ?
TSS'H TSS'H!

I WATCHED AS THE PLAINS ROLLED BY BENEATH ME, ENDLESS AND FEATURELESS, BOTH MY RESERVES OF FUEL AND MY HOPES OF FINDING FRIEDRICH RUNNING DANGEROUSLY LOW.

FINALLY, A CLOUD OF DUST, POSSIBLY STIRRED UP BY SOLDIERS ON THE MOVE, GAVE ME NEW HOPE. WITH MY HEART RACING, I HEADED TOWARD IT...

...BUT I WAS TO BE CRUELLY DISAPPOINTED.

?!

?

OH NO! KIEKEFRETTERS!

A WHOLE ARMY OF THEM!

?

?

DAMN IT!

WHERE'D THAT BIRD COME FROM? IT'S NOT OURS... SHALL I GIVE THE ORDER TO SHOOT IT DOWN, SIR?

LOOKS LIKE SOME KIND OF CROSS ON IT... YES, IT'S THAT CRAZY PROTESTANT FLYING DOCTOR. LEAVE HIM BE, LIEUTENANT...

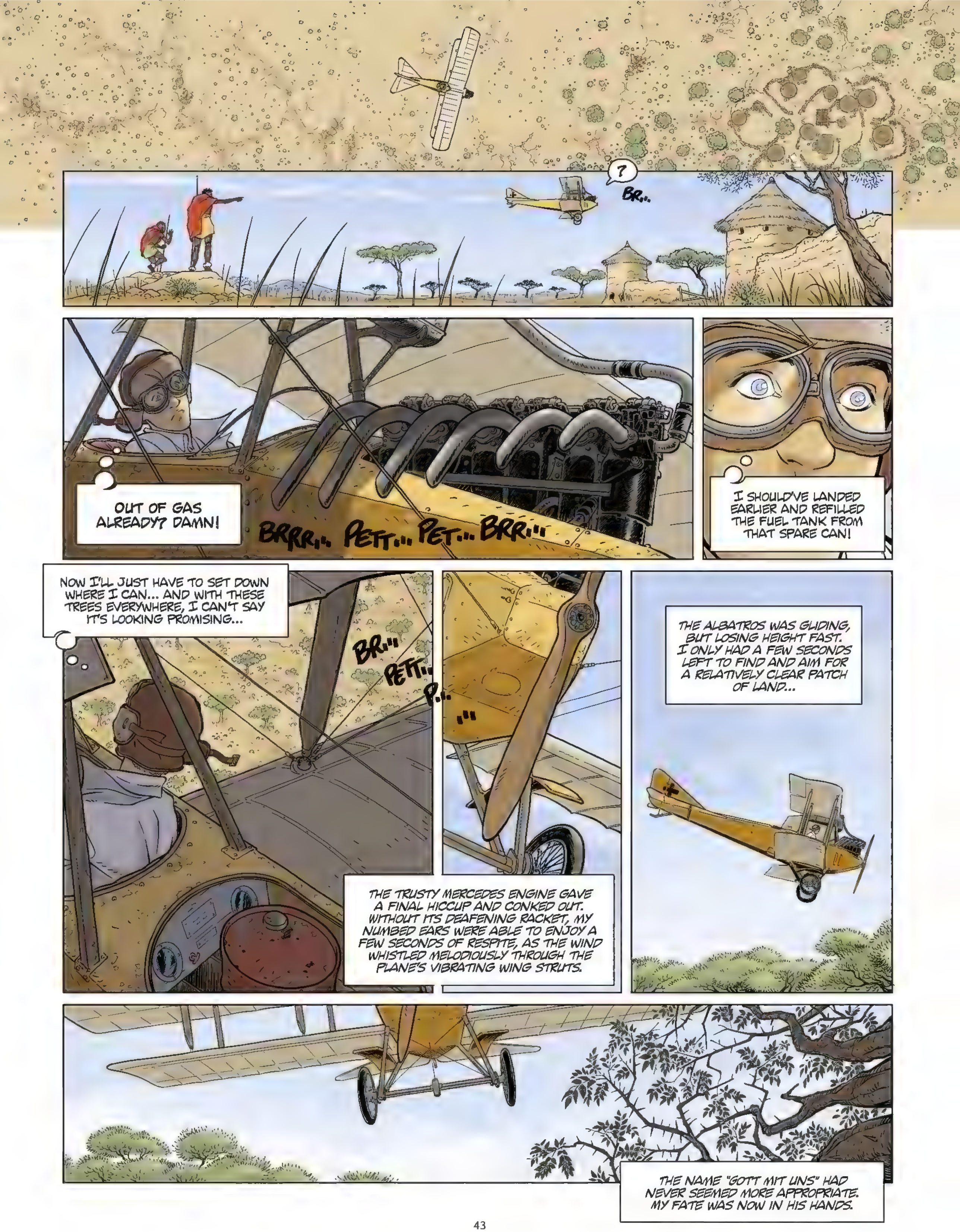
HE'S HARMLESS.

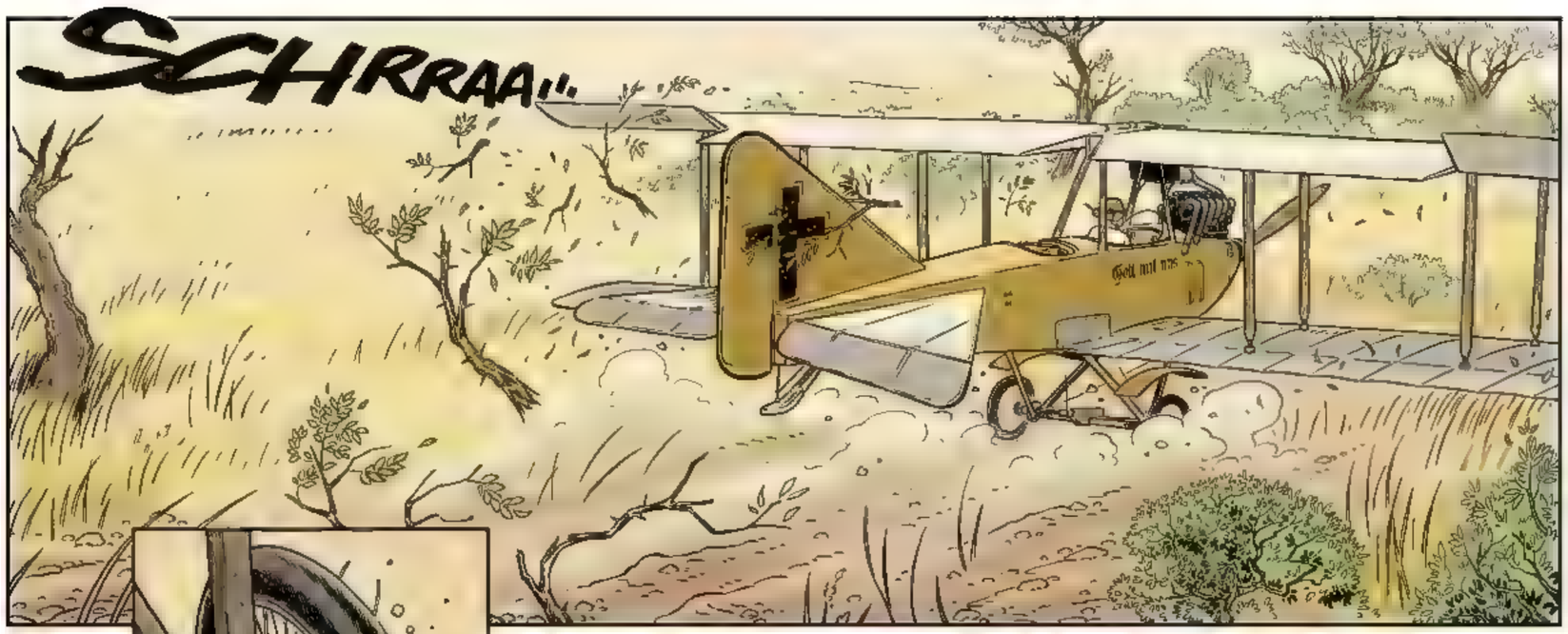
THEY'RE HEADING NORTHWEST, LIKE ME. WHAT IF...

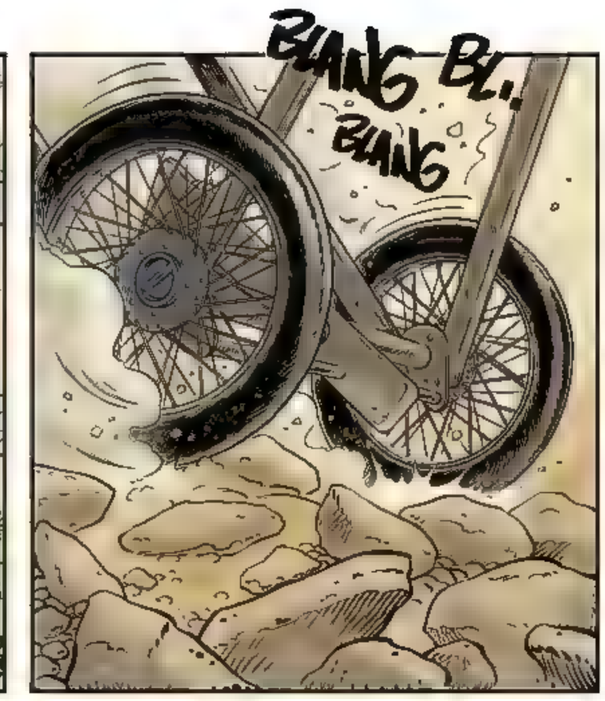
WHAT IF THEY'RE CHASING NEUMANN'S MEN?

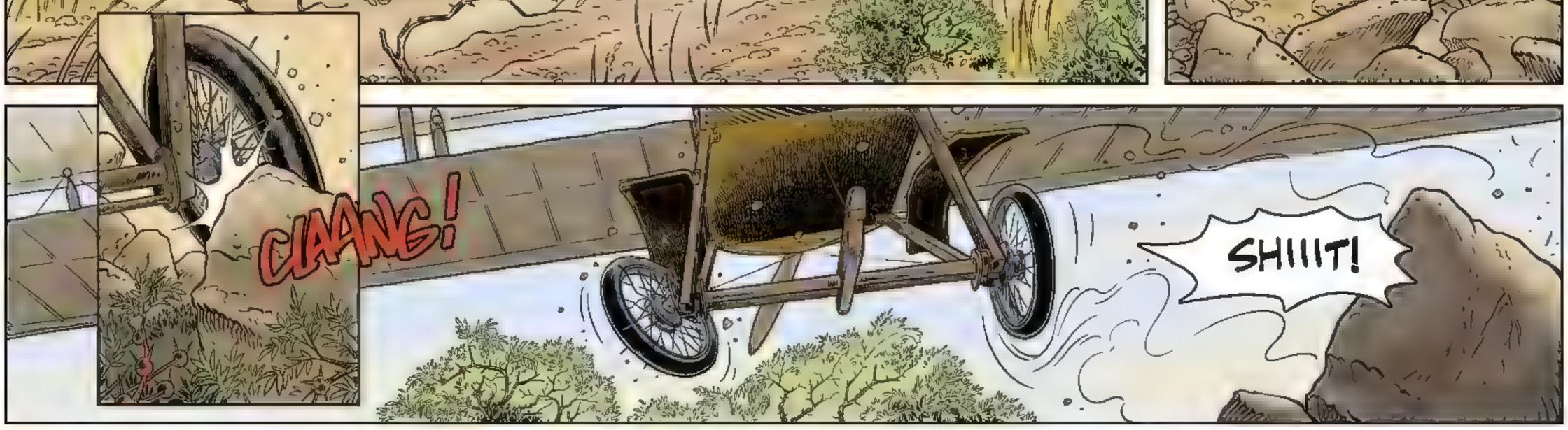
AT LEAST IT WOULD MEAN I'M HEADING THE RIGHT WAY...

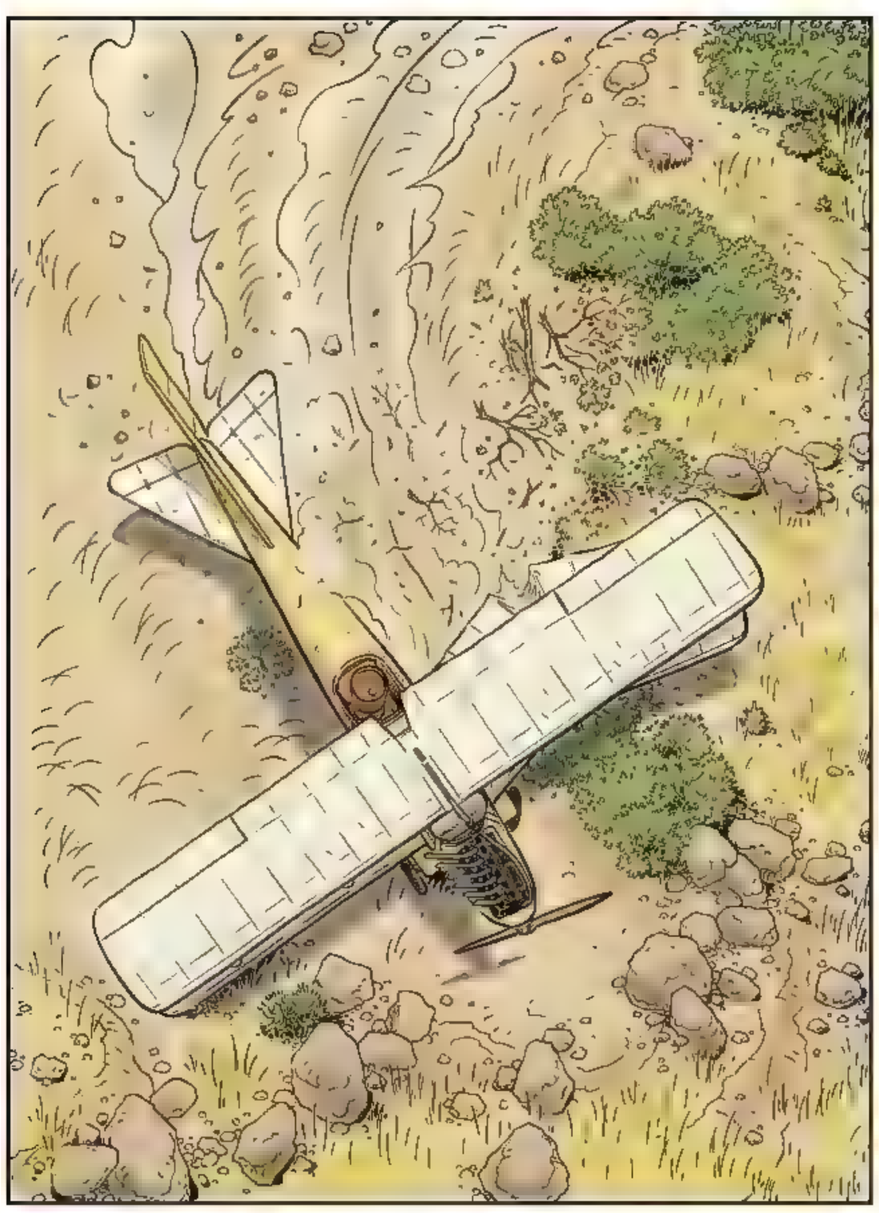
I'LL KEEP GOING. WE'LL SEE.

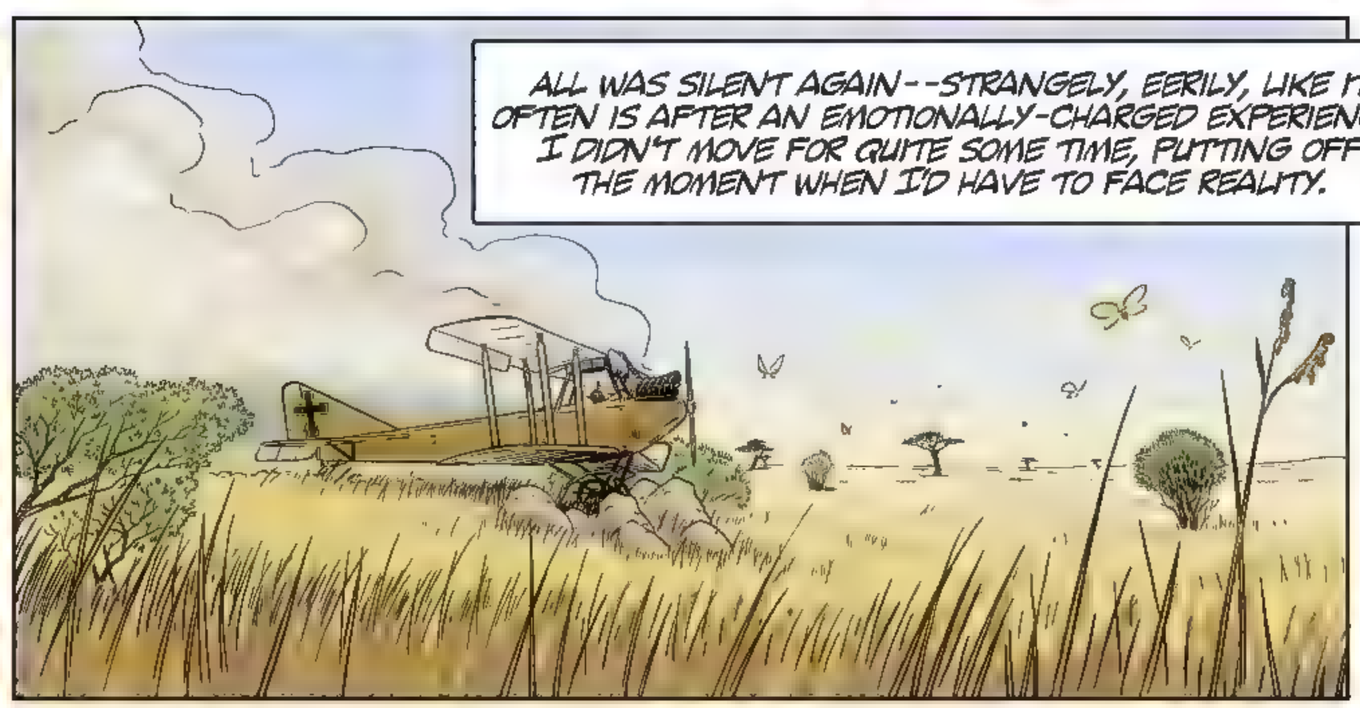

?
BR...
OUT OF GAS ALREADY? DAMN!
BRRR... PETT... PET... BRR...
I SHOULD'VE LANDED EARLIER AND REFILLED THE FUEL TANK FROM THAT SPARE CAN!
NOW I'LL JUST HAVE TO SET DOWN WHERE I CAN... AND WITH THESE TREES EVERYWHERE, I CAN'T SAY IT'S LOOKING PROMISING...
BR...
PETT...
P...
THE TRUSTY MERCEDES ENGINE GAVE A FINAL HICCUP AND CONKED OUT. WITHOUT ITS DEAFENING RACKET, MY NUMBED EARS WERE ABLE TO ENJOY A FEW SECONDS OF RESPITE, AS THE WIND WHISTLED MELODIOUSLY THROUGH THE PLANE'S VIBRATING WING STRUTS.
THE ALBATROS WAS GLIDING, BUT LOSING HEIGHT FAST. I ONLY HAD A FEW SECONDS LEFT TO FIND AND AIM FOR A RELATIVELY CLEAR PATCH OF LAND...
THE NAME "GOTT MIT UNS" HAD NEVER SEEMED MORE APPROPRIATE. MY FATE WAS NOW IN HIS HANDS.

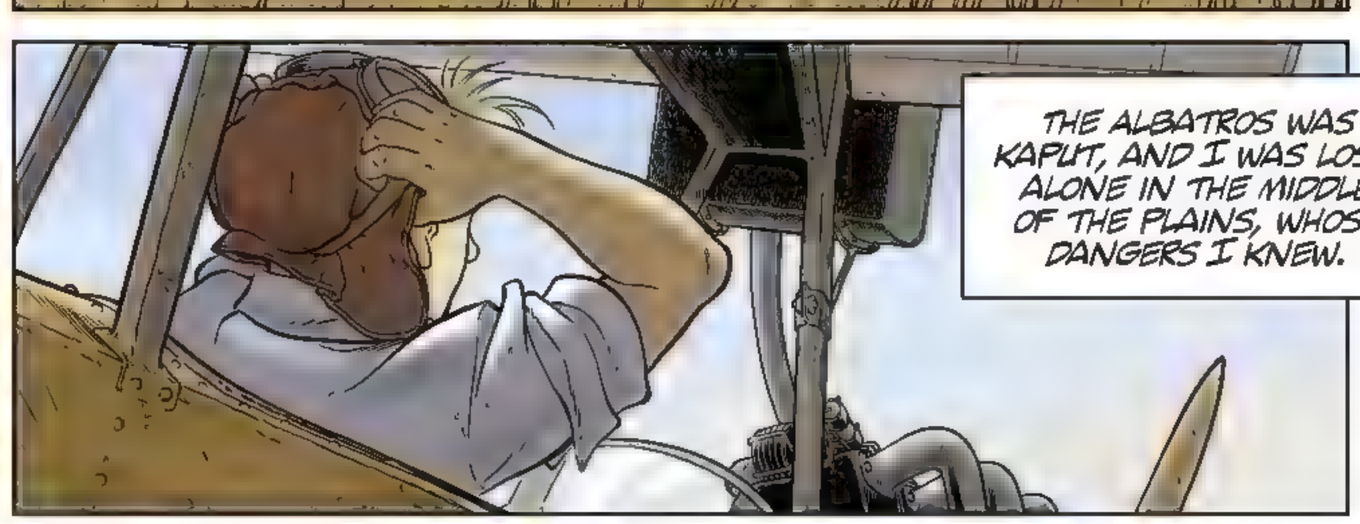

SCHRRAA!!

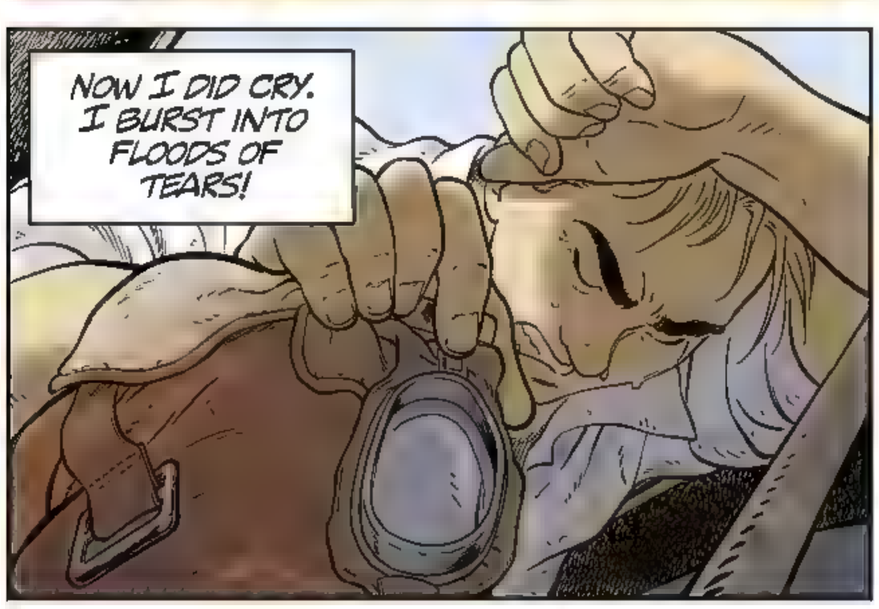

BLANG BL..
BLANG

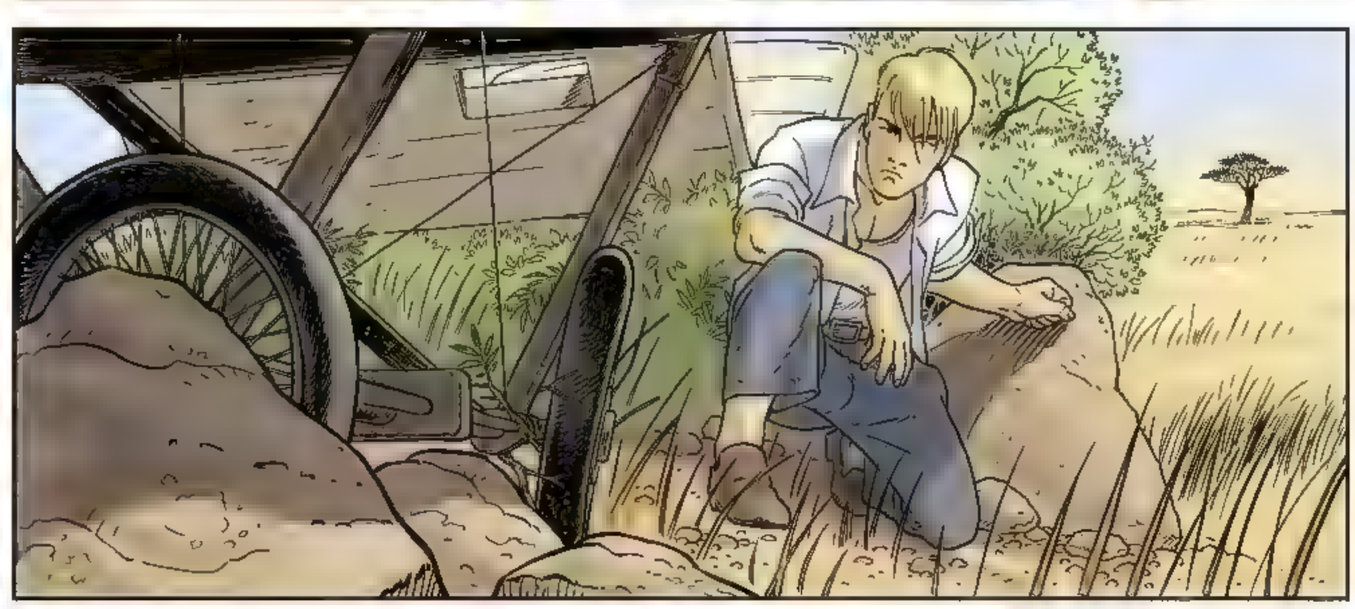

CLAANG!
SHIIIT!

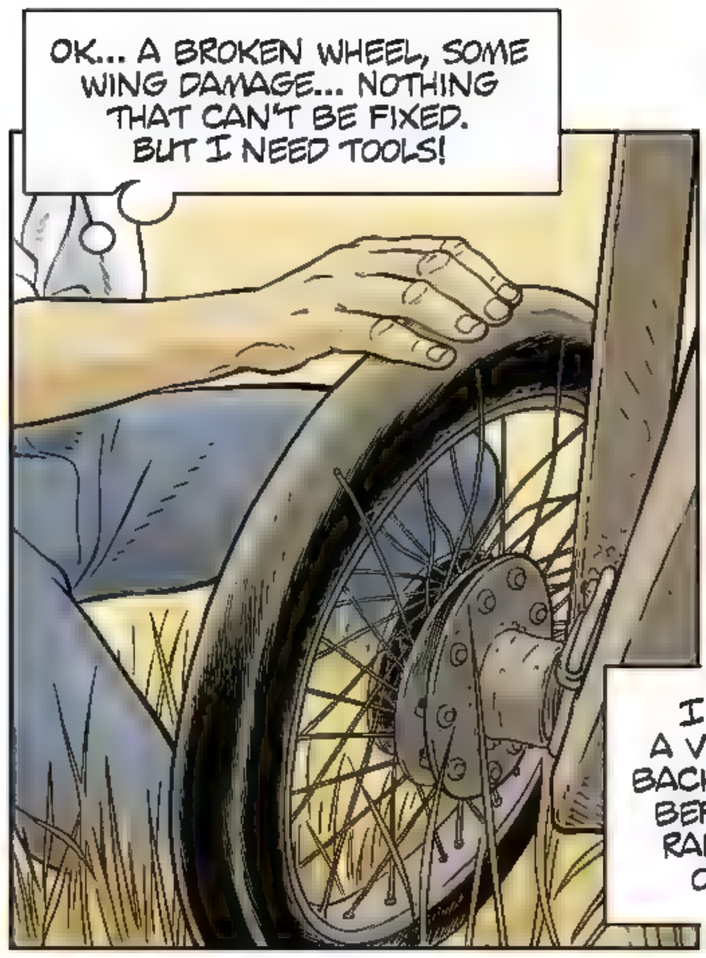


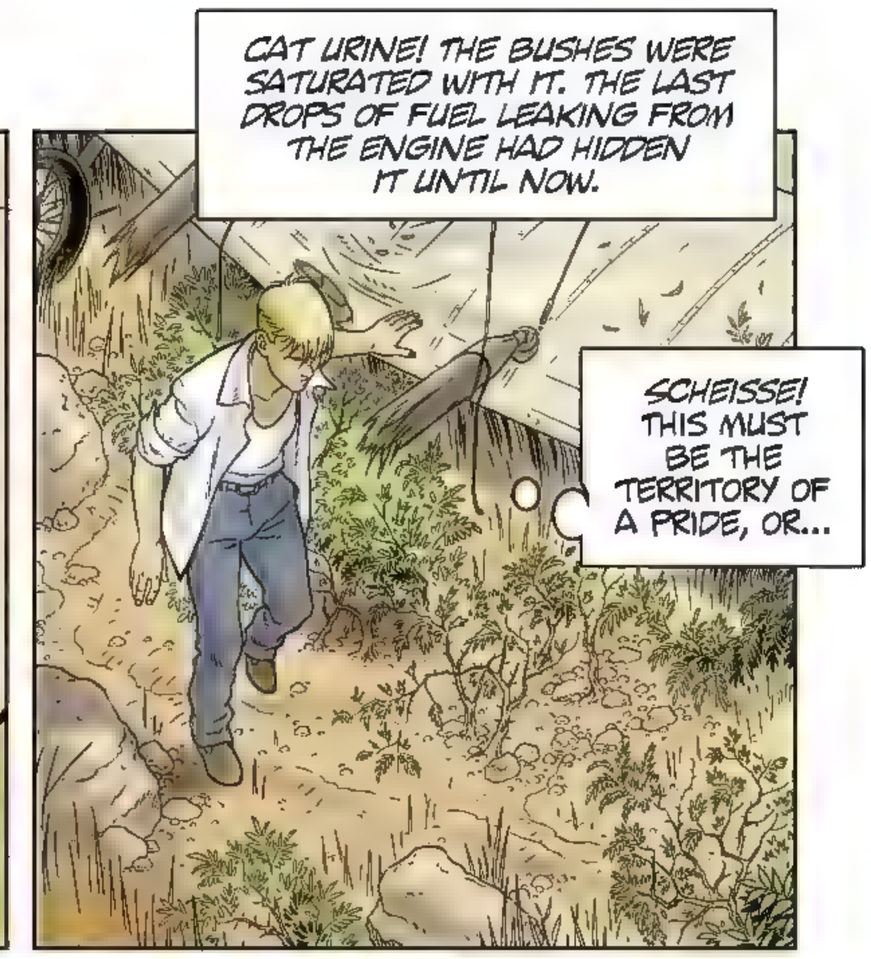

ALL WAS SILENT AGAIN--STRANGELY, EERILY, LIKE IT OFTEN IS AFTER AN EMOTIONALLY-CHARGED EXPERIENCE. I DIDN'T MOVE FOR QUITE SOME TIME, PUTTING OFF THE MOMENT WHEN I'D HAVE TO FACE REALITY.

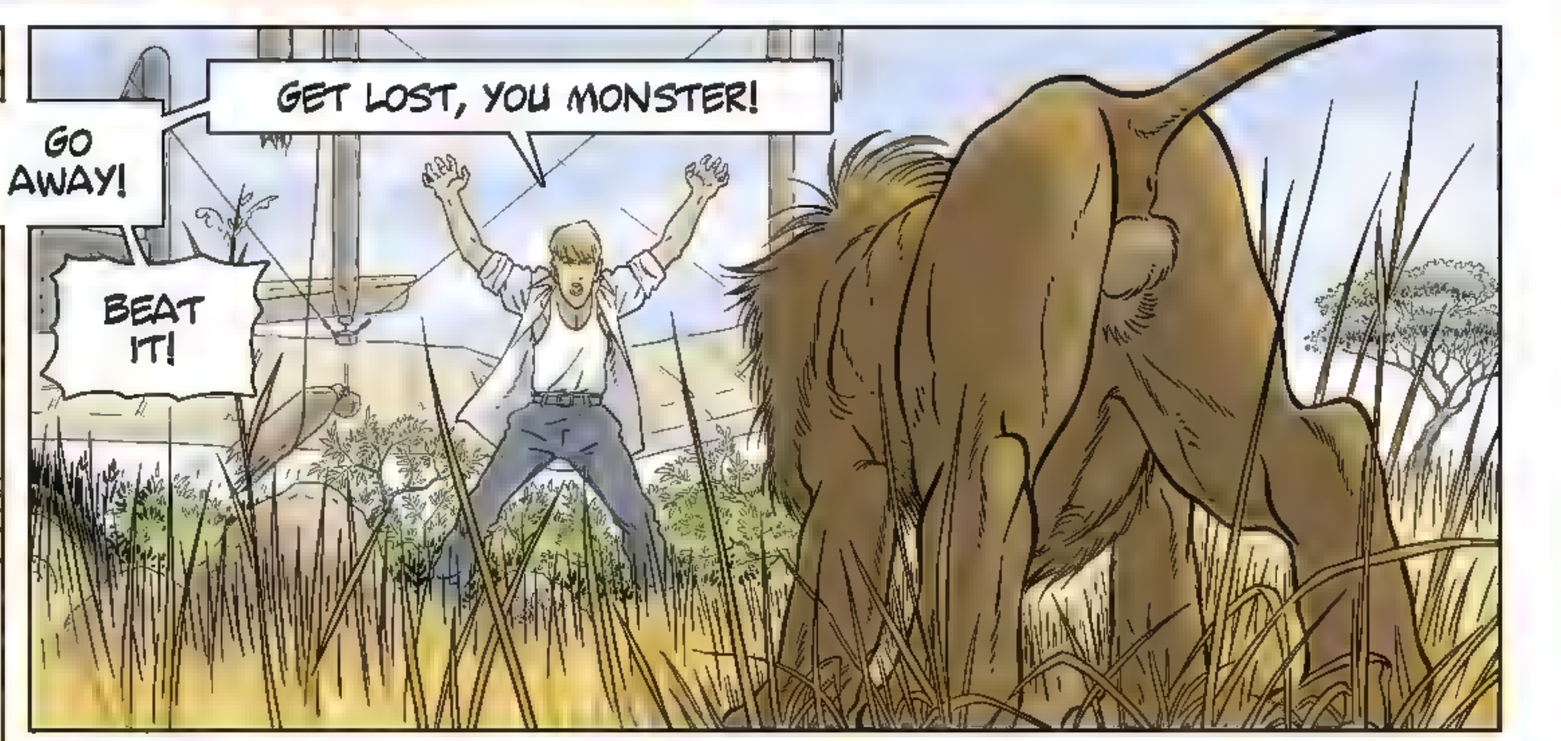

THE ALBATROS WAS KAPUT, AND I WAS LOST, ALONE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PLAINS, WHOSE DANGERS I KNEW.


NOW I DID CRY. I BURST INTO FLOODS OF TEARS!

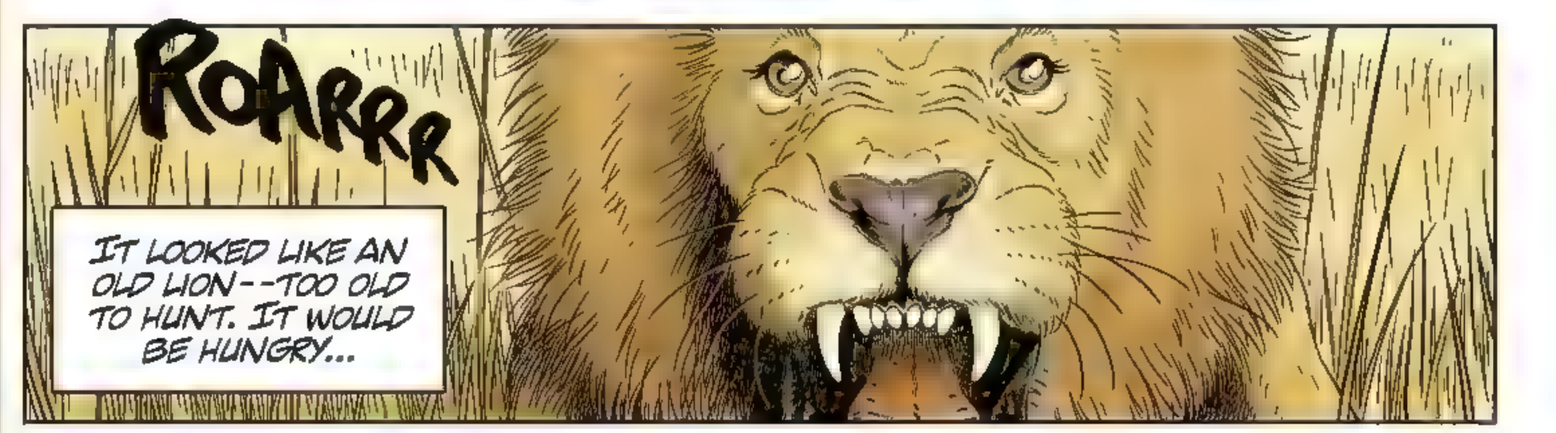


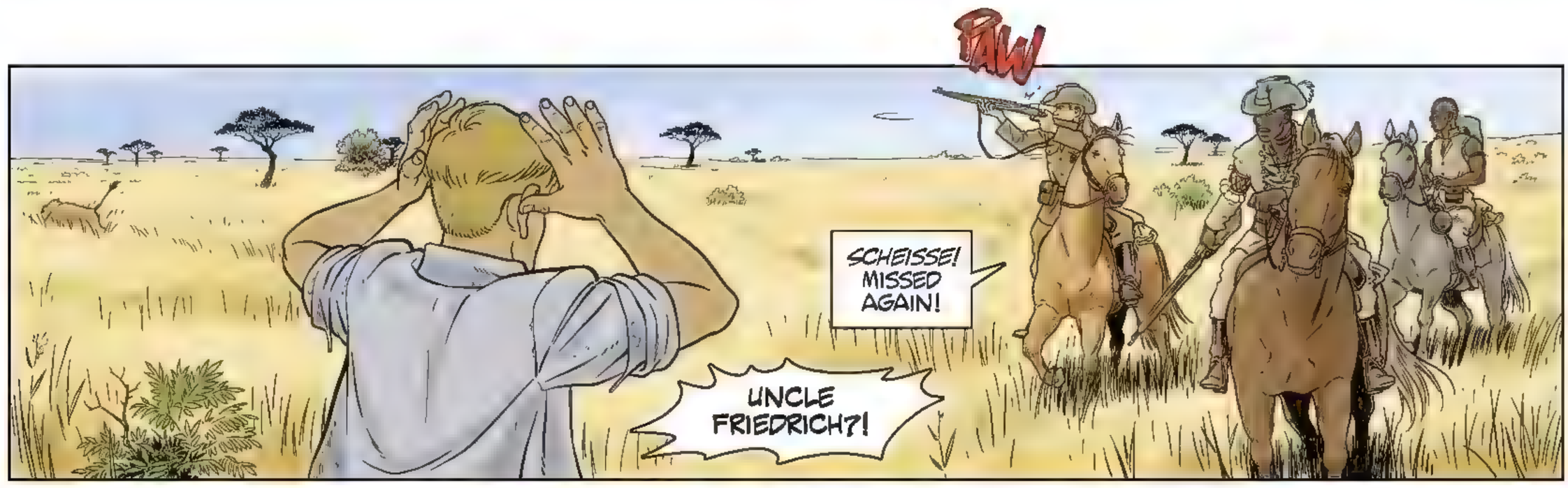


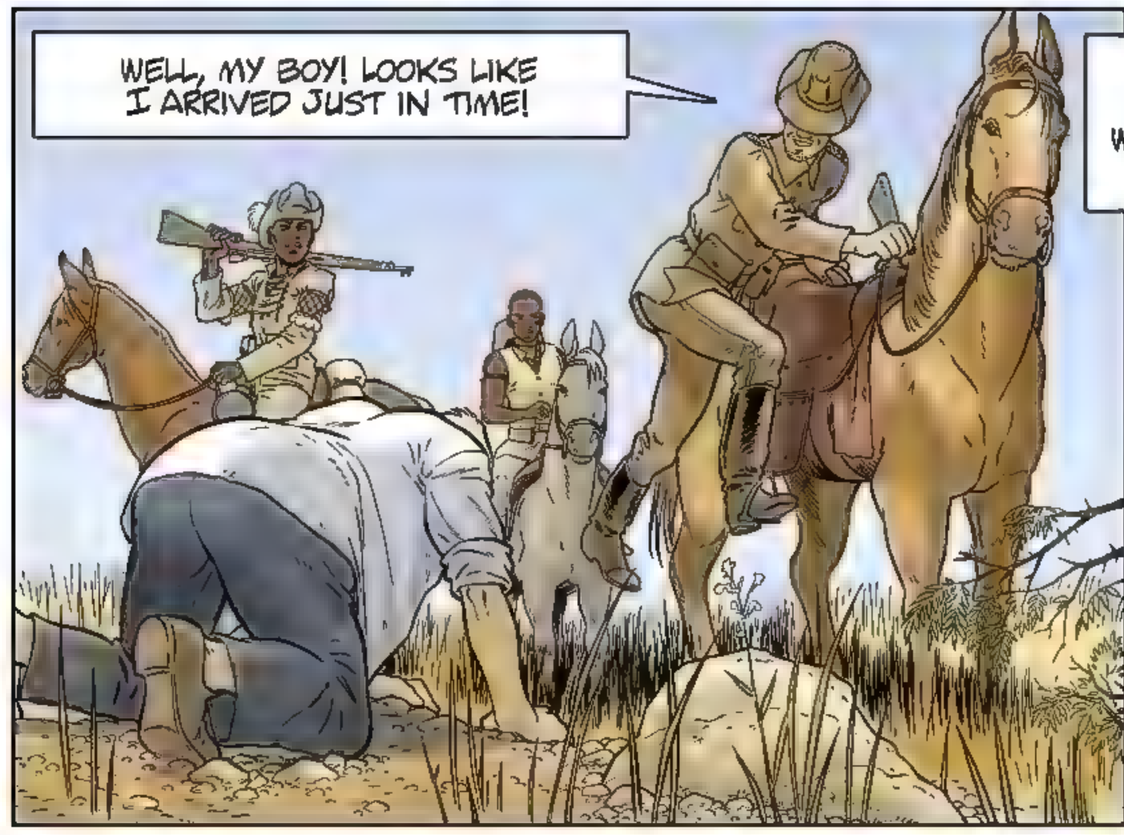


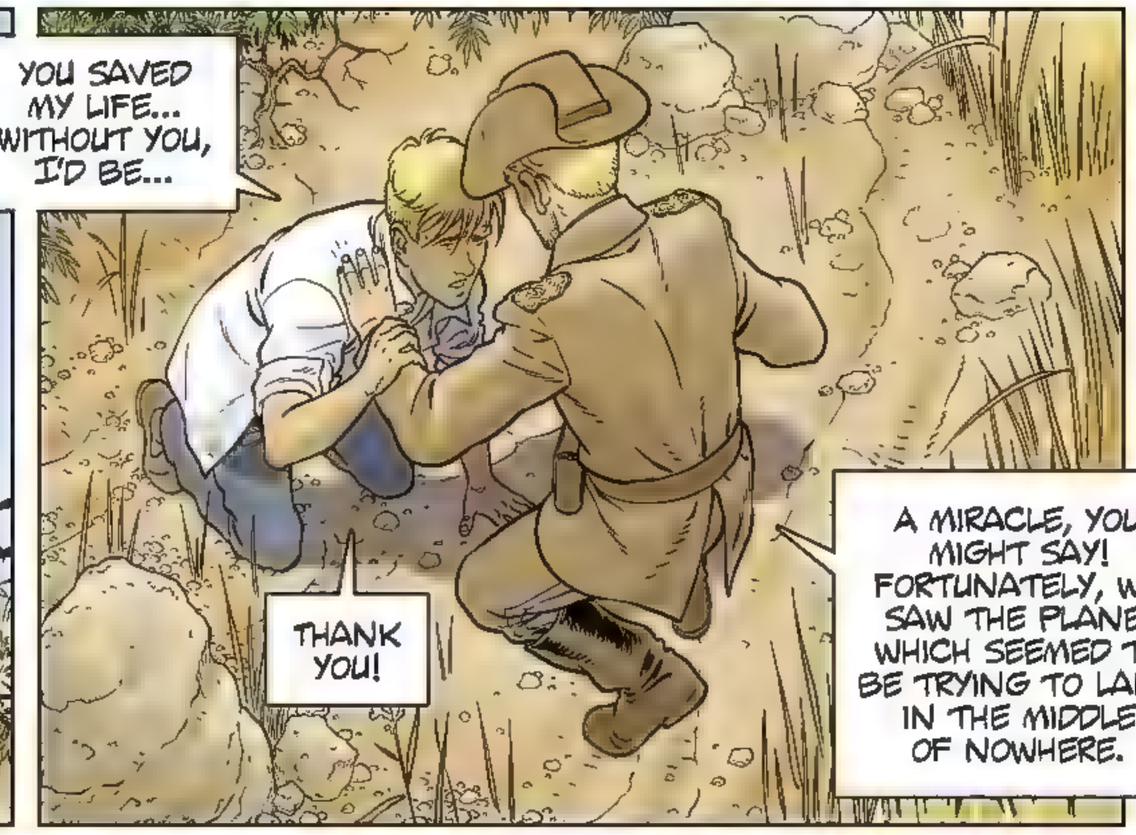


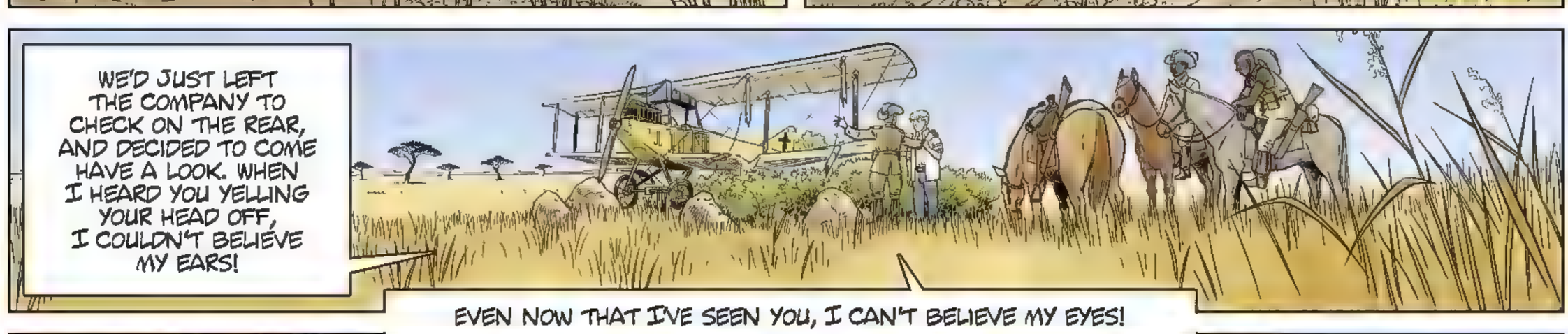
IN THE BUSH, I'D ONCE SEEN MY FATHER FRIGHTEN OFF A LEOPARD BY SHOUTING AT IT. BUT THE VOICE OF A SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD BOY WAS OBVIOUSLY NOT AS LOUD OR RESONANT AS THE VOICE OF A GROWN MAN WHO WAS USED TO GIVING ORDERS...

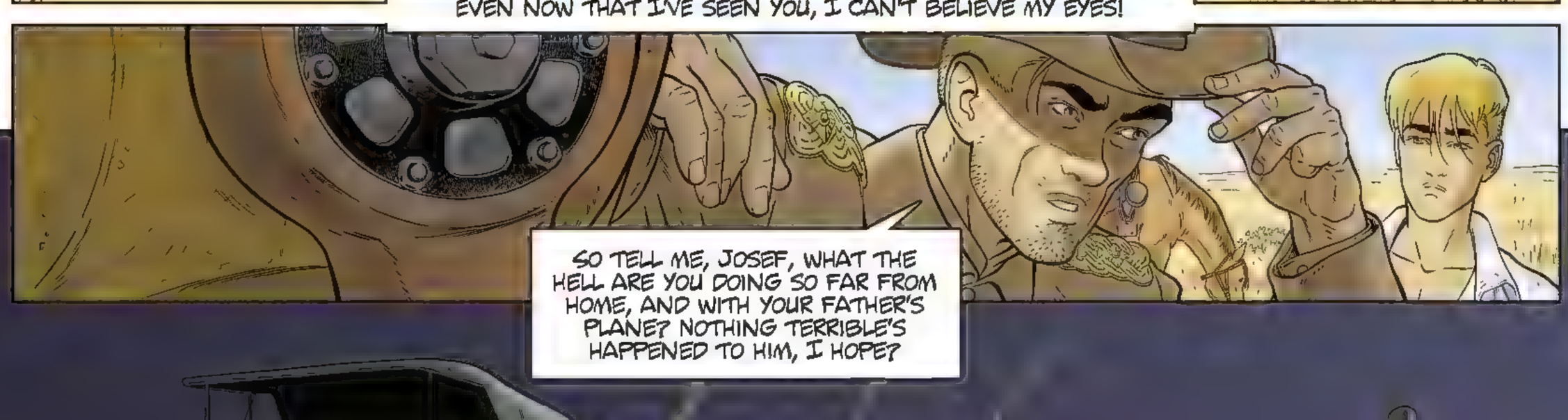



PAW!
SCHEISSE! MISSED AGAIN!
UNCLE FRIEDRICH?!

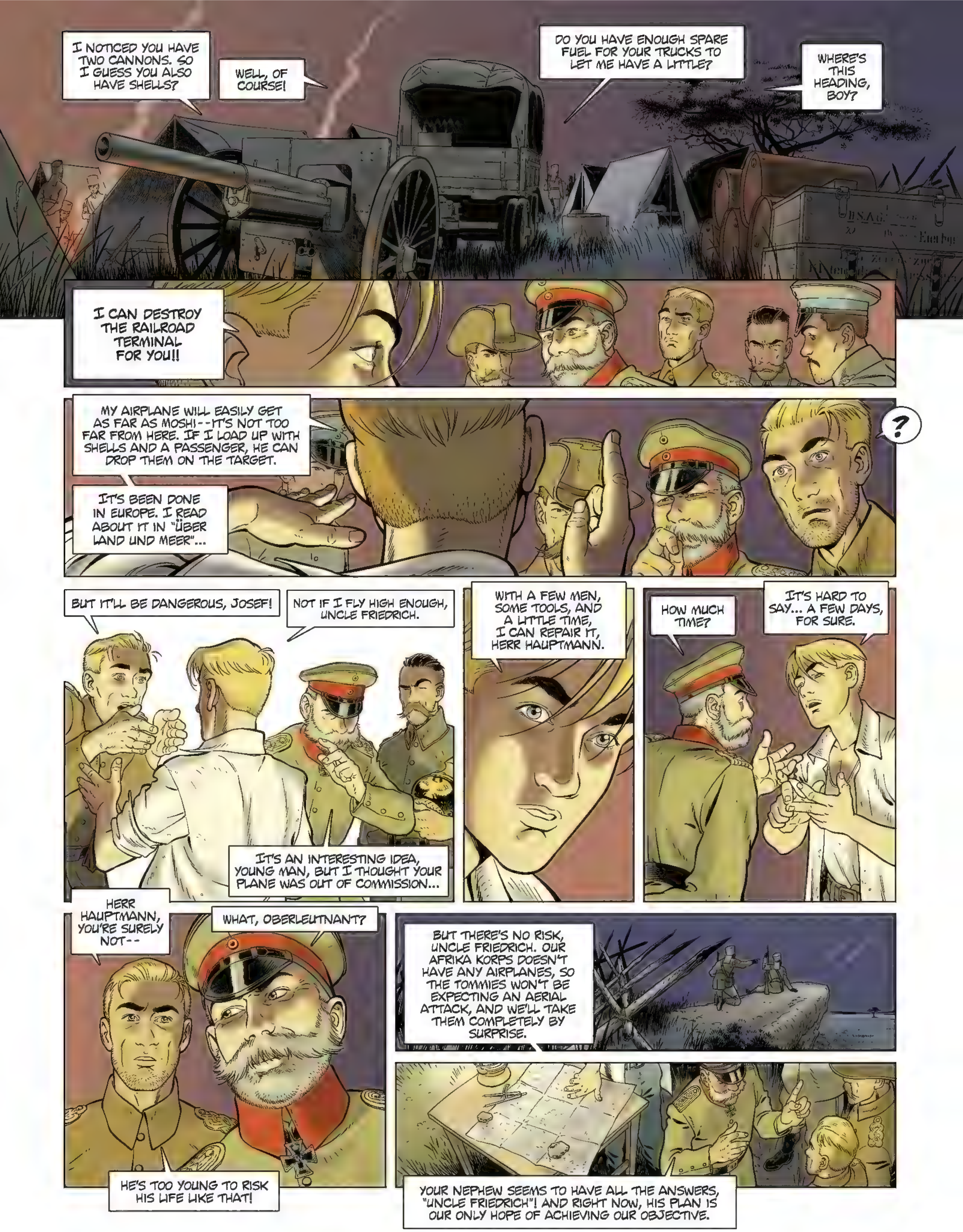

WELL, MY BOY! LOOKS LIKE I ARRIVED JUST IN TIME!


YOU SAVED MY LIFE... WITHOUT YOU, I'D BE...
THANK YOU!
A MIRACLE, YOU MIGHT SAY! FORTUNATELY, WE SAW THE PLANE, WHICH SEEMED TO BE TRYING TO LAND IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE.


WE'D JUST LEFT THE COMPANY TO CHECK ON THE REAR, AND DECIDED TO COME HAVE A LOOK. WHEN I HEARD YOU YELLING YOUR HEAD OFF, I COULDN'T BELIEVE MY EARS!
EVEN NOW THAT I'VE SEEN YOU, I CAN'T BELIEVE MY EYES!


SO TELL ME, JOSEF, WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING SO FAR FROM HOME, AND WITH YOUR FATHER'S PLANE? NOTHING TERRIBLE'S HAPPENED TO HIM, I HOPE?

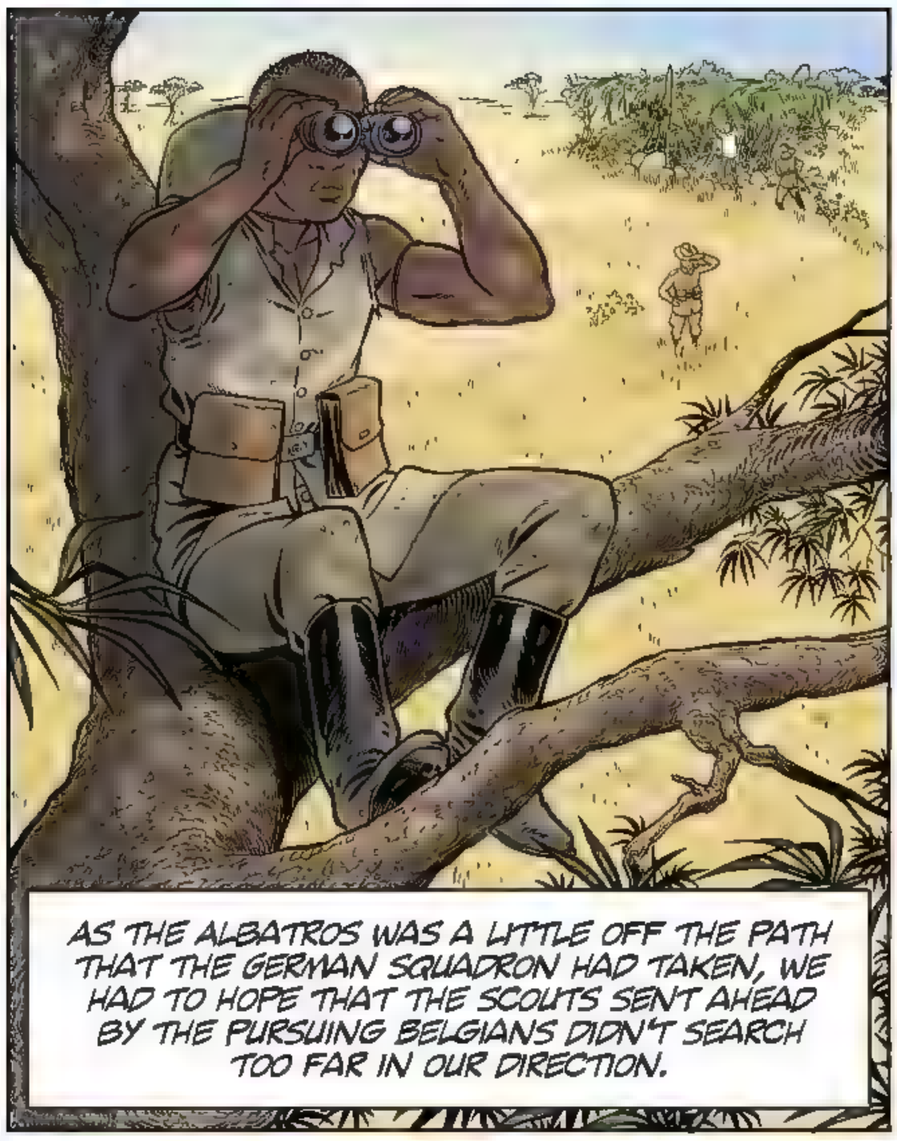
(1) CAPTAIN. (2) BRITISH COLONIAL TROOPS.
(3) A COMBINED MILITARY AND POLICE FORCE CREATED BY LEOPOLD II OF BELGIUM TO DEFEND THE CONGO.

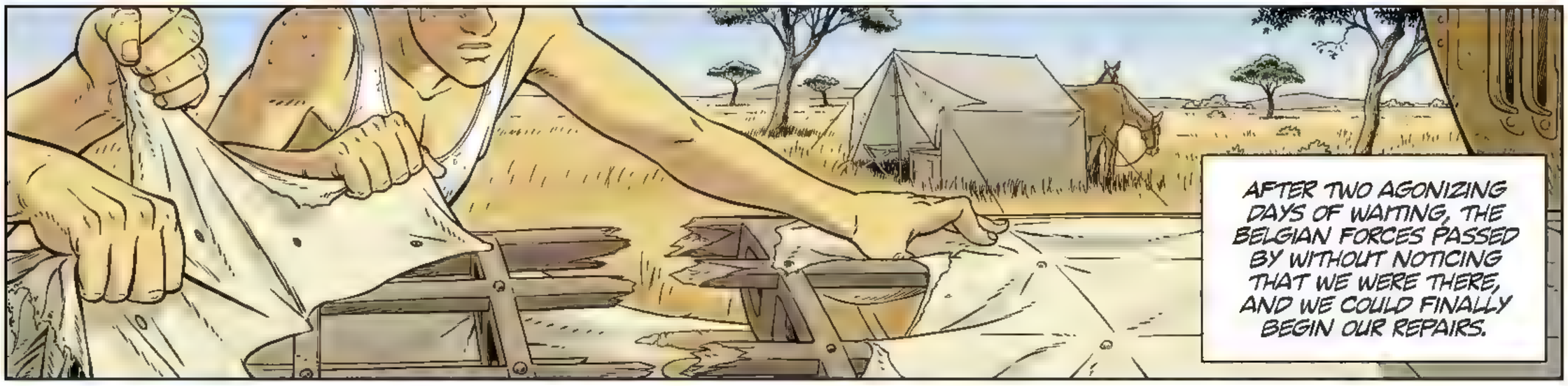

I NOTICED YOU HAVE TWO CANNONS. SO I GUESS YOU ALSO HAVE SHELLS?
WELL, OF COURSE!
DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH SPARE FUEL FOR YOUR TRUCKS TO LET ME HAVE A LITTLE?
WHERE'S THIS HEADING, BOY?
I CAN DESTROY THE RAILROAD TERMINAL FOR YOU!!
MY AIRPLANE WILL EASILY GET AS FAR AS MOSHI--IT'S NOT TOO FAR FROM HERE. IF I LOAD UP WITH SHELLS AND A PASSENGER, HE CAN DROP THEM ON THE TARGET.
IT'S BEEN DONE IN EUROPE. I READ ABOUT IT IN "ÜBER LAND UND MEER"...
?
BUT IT'LL BE DANGEROUS, JOSEF!
NOT IF I FLY HIGH ENOUGH, UNCLE FRIEDRICH.
IT'S AN INTERESTING IDEA, YOUNG MAN, BUT I THOUGHT YOUR PLANE WAS OUT OF COMMISSION...
WITH A FEW MEN, SOME TOOLS, AND A LITTLE TIME, I CAN REPAIR IT, HERR HAUPTMANN.
HOW MUCH TIME?
IT'S HARD TO SAY... A FEW DAYS, FOR SURE.
HERR HAUPTMANN, YOU'RE SURELY NOT--
WHAT, OBERLEUTNANT?
HE'S TOO YOUNG TO RISK HIS LIFE LIKE THAT!
BUT THERE'S NO RISK, UNCLE FRIEDRICH. OUR AFRIKA KORPS DOESN'T HAVE ANY AIRPLANES, SO THE TOMMIES WON'T BE EXPECTING AN AERIAL ATTACK, AND WE'LL TAKE THEM COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE.
YOUR NEPHEW SEEMS TO HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS, "UNCLE FRIEDRICH"! AND RIGHT NOW, HIS PLAN IS OUR ONLY HOPE OF ACHIEVING OUR OBJECTIVE.

HERR HAUPTMANN, IF YOU'LL LET ME--
THE DISCUSSION IS CLOSED, OBERLEUTNANT. JOSEF HAS VOLUNTEERED. HE'S A TRUE PATRIOT, AND I SAY, "BRAVO!"
THE BELGIANS ARE JUST TWO DAYS' MARCH BEHIND US. WE'LL LEAVE HIM HERE TO REPAIR HIS AIRPLANE, AND GO AHEAD TO CLEAR HIS PATH TO MOSHI.
KRUSE! FIRST THING TOMORROW MORNING, YOU'LL TAKE THE BOY TO HIS PLANE, WHICH YOU'LL CAMOUFLAGE COMPLETELY. THAT'S KEY, OBERJÄGER! (1)
JAWOHL, HERR HAUPTMANN!
MEANWHILE, WE'LL CONTINUE OUR ADVANCE TOWARD MOSHI, WITH THE BELGIANS TRAILING IN OUR WAKE. AS SOON AS WE ENCOUNTER THE KING'S AFRICAN RIFLES, WE'LL HEAD WEST TO DIVERT BOTH SETS OF TROOPS AWAY FROM THE TARGET.
KRUSE! AS SOON AS THE KIEKEFRETTERS FOLLOWING US HAVE PASSED BY, YOU'LL HELP JOSEF REPAIR HIS AIRPLANE. TAKE TWO MEN WITH YOU, AND AS MUCH EQUIPMENT AS HE NEEDS.
JAWOHL, HERR HAUPTMANN!
AND DON'T FORGET THE SHELLS! YOU'LL BE GOING WITH HIM ON HIS FLIGHT TO MOSHI.
?
IS SOMETHING WRONG, OBERJÄGER?
CAN HE REALLY FLY IT, HERR HAUPTMANN?
HE GOT THIS FAR, DIDN'T HE?
HERR HAUPTMANN? WITH YOUR PERMISSION, I'D LIKE TO VOLUNTEER FOR THIS MISSION.
IF THIS YOUNG MAN IS TO DIE, I MUST BE WITH HIM! IF I LET HIM GO ALONE, HIS FATHER WILL NEVER FORGIVE ME!
FINE, OBERLEUTNANT, BUT DON'T TRY TO DISSUADE HIM FROM DOING HIS PATRIOTIC DUTY.
DO I HAVE YOUR WORD?
YOU DO, HERR HAUPTMANN.

(1) SERGEANT.

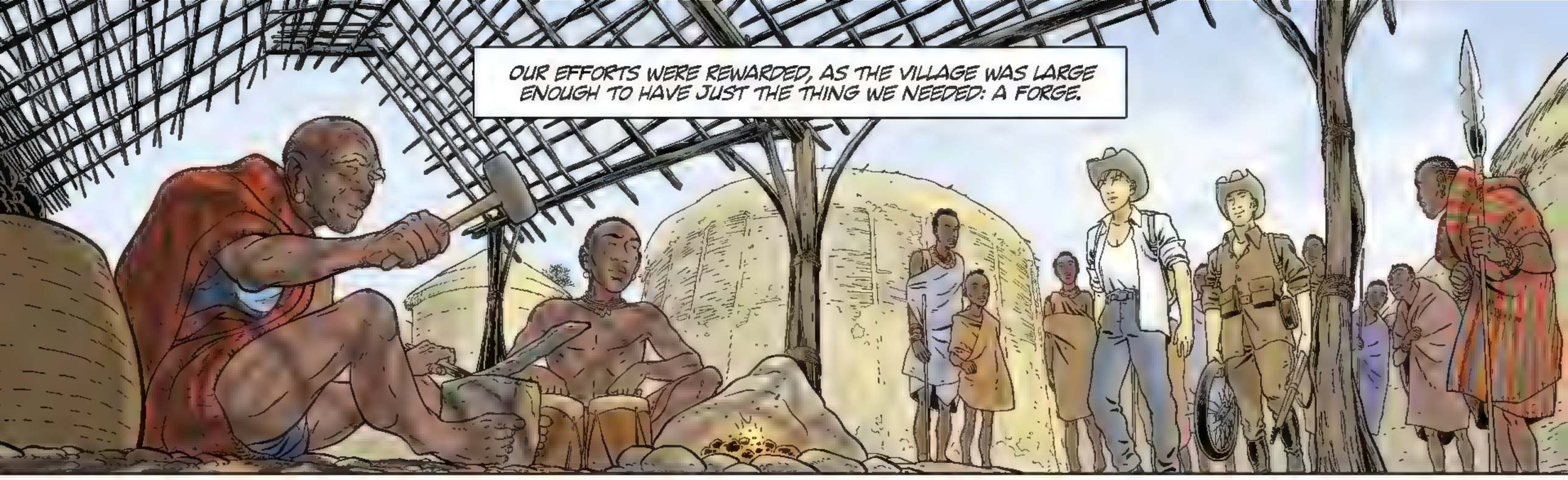
EVERYTHING WAS DONE EXACTLY AS AGREED.

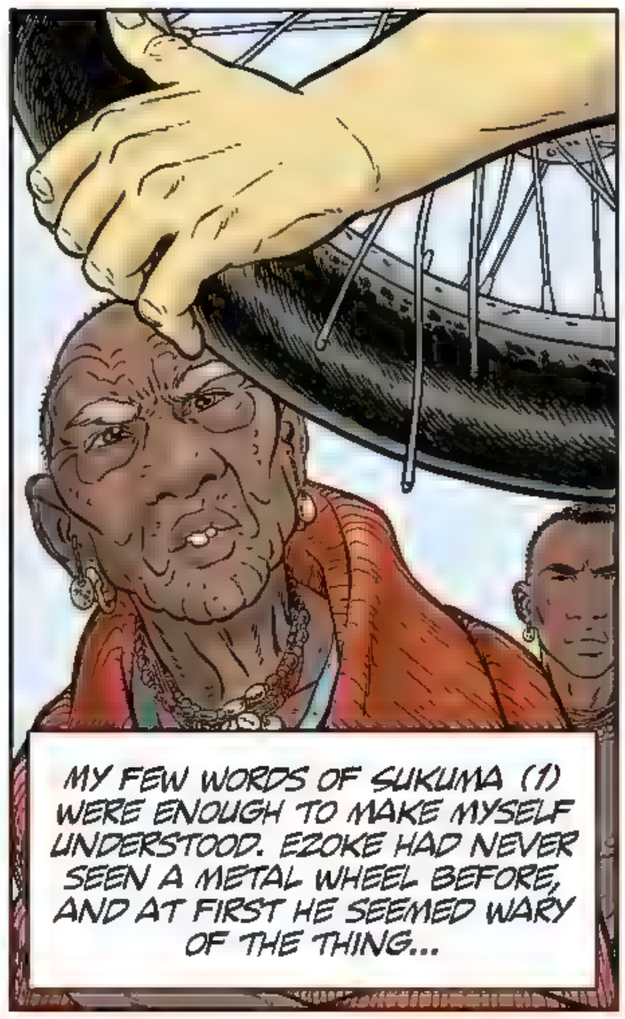

AS THE ALBATROS WAS A LITTLE OFF THE PATH THAT THE GERMAN SQUADRON HAD TAKEN, WE HAD TO HOPE THAT THE SCOUTS SENT AHEAD BY THE PURSUING BELGIANS DIDN'T SEARCH TOO FAR IN OUR DIRECTION.


AFTER TWO AGONIZING DAYS OF WAITING, THE BELGIAN FORCES PASSED BY WITHOUT NOTICING THAT WE WERE THERE, AND WE COULD FINALLY BEGIN OUR REPAIRS.

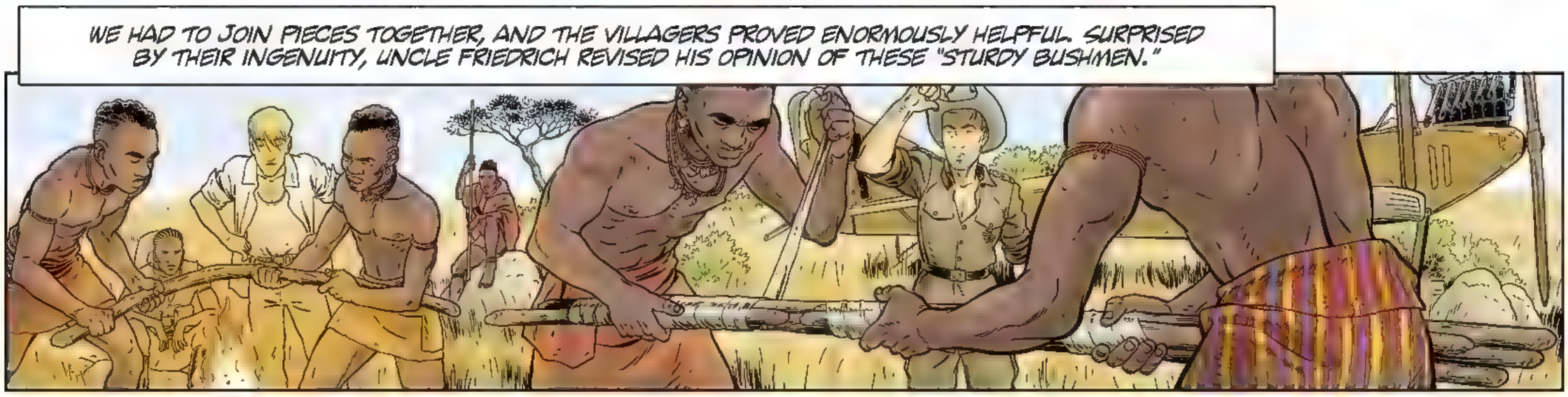
WHILE OUR TWO ASKARIS CUT BRANCHES STRONG ENOUGH TO REPLACE THE WING STRUTS THAT HAD BROKEN WHEN I LANDED...

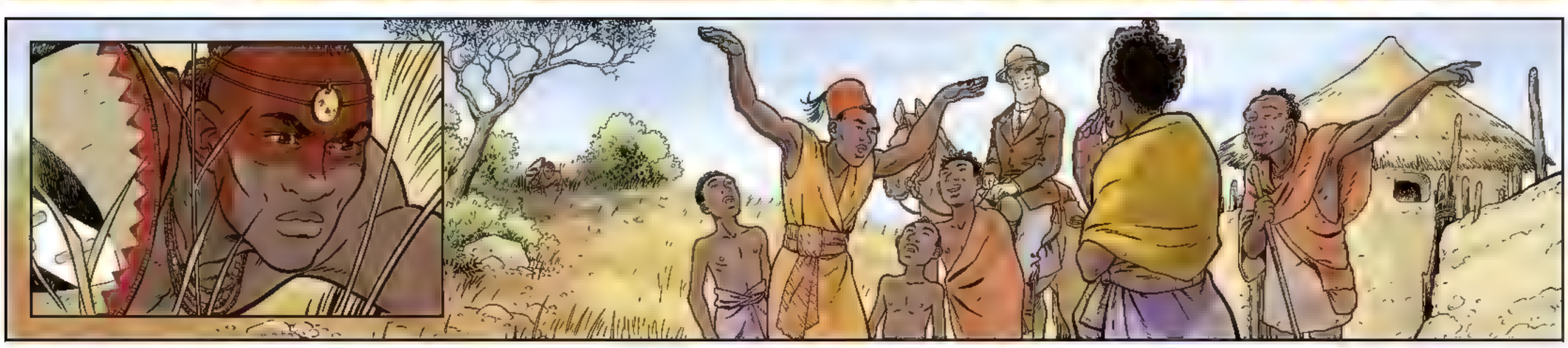
...MY UNCLE AND I WENT LOOKING FOR THE VILLAGE I'D SPOTTED FROM THE AIR BEFORE THE PLANE RAN OUT OF FUEL.
IT TOOK US MORE THAN TWO HOURS TO FIND IT!

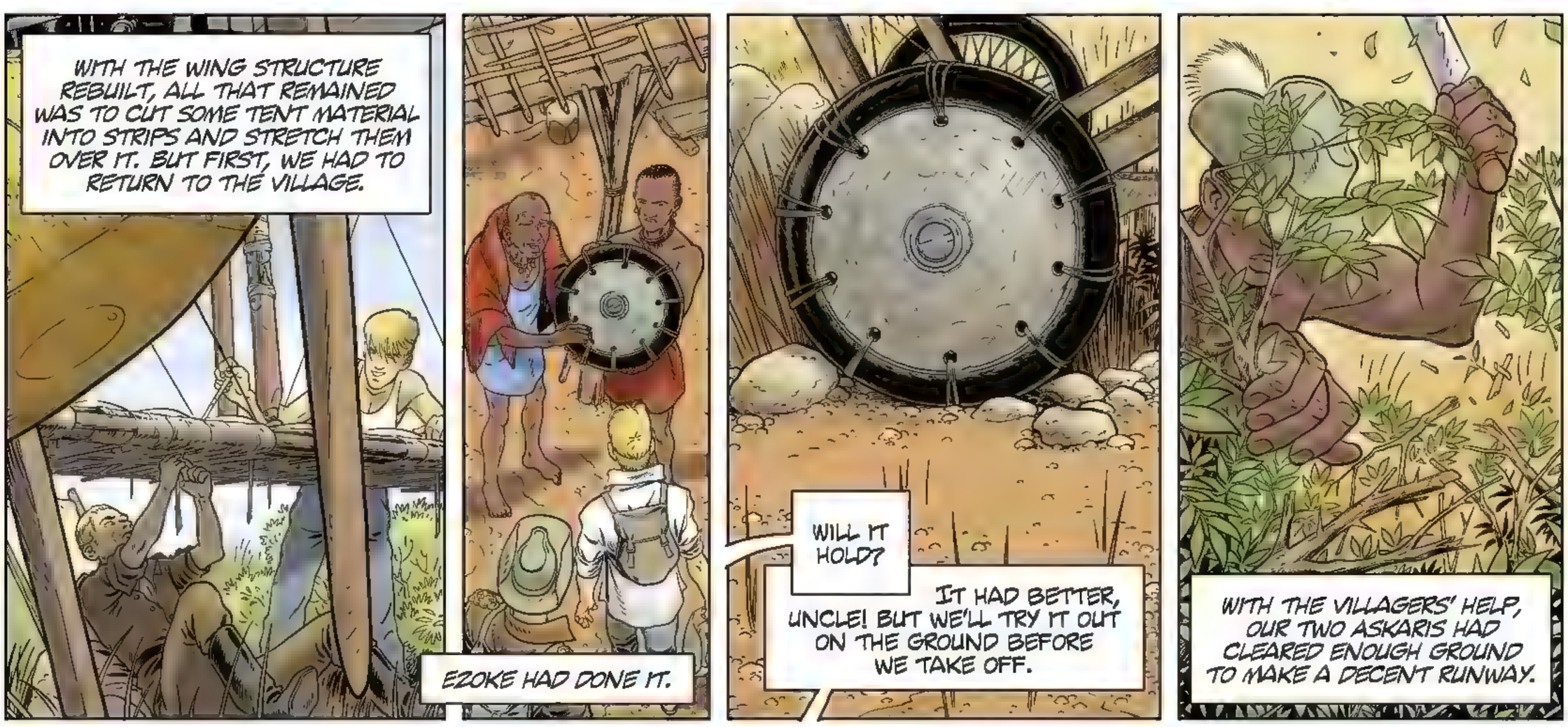




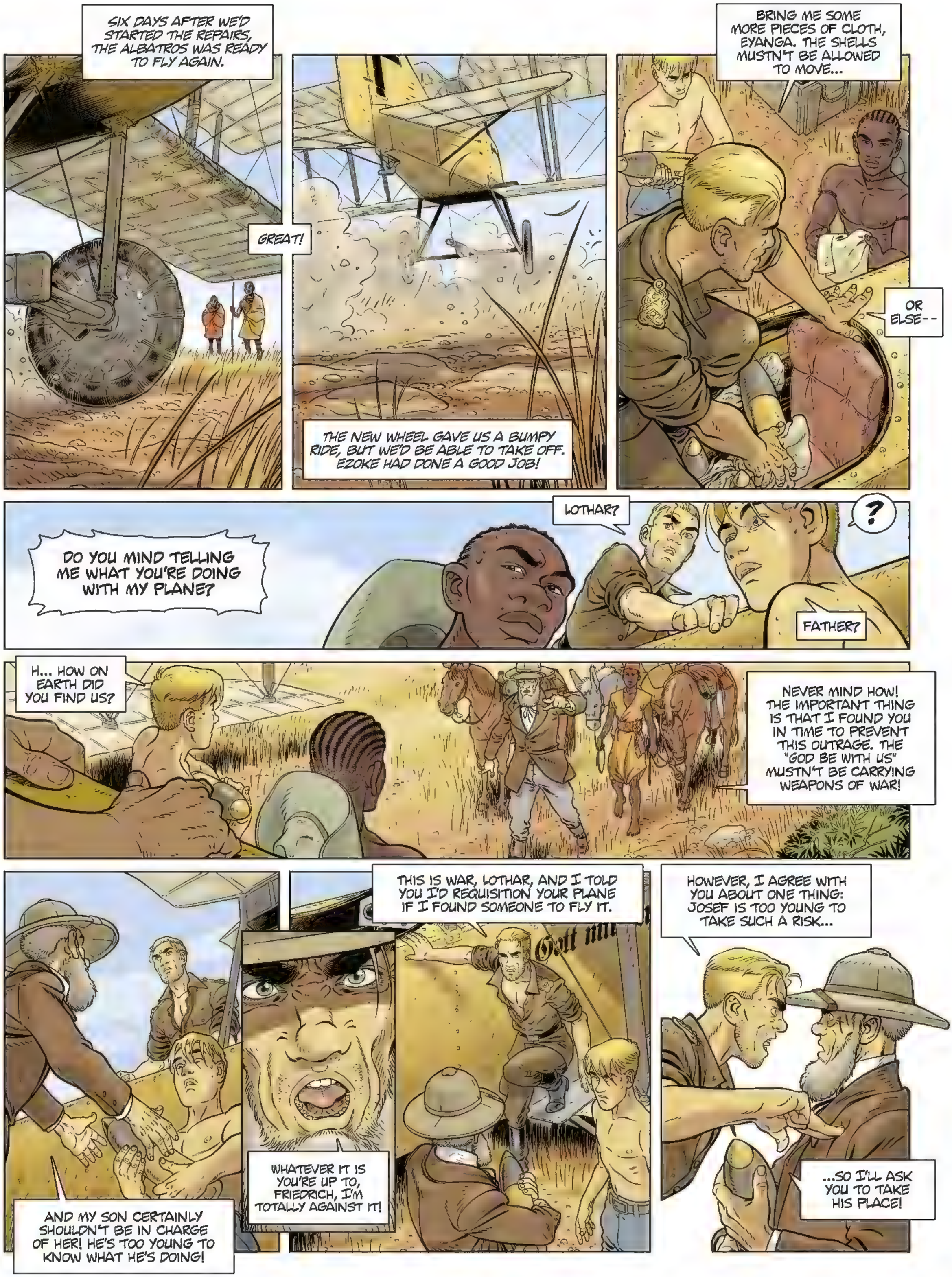
(1) A BANTU DIALECT WIDELY SPOKEN IN THE REGION EAST OF LAKE VICTORIA.

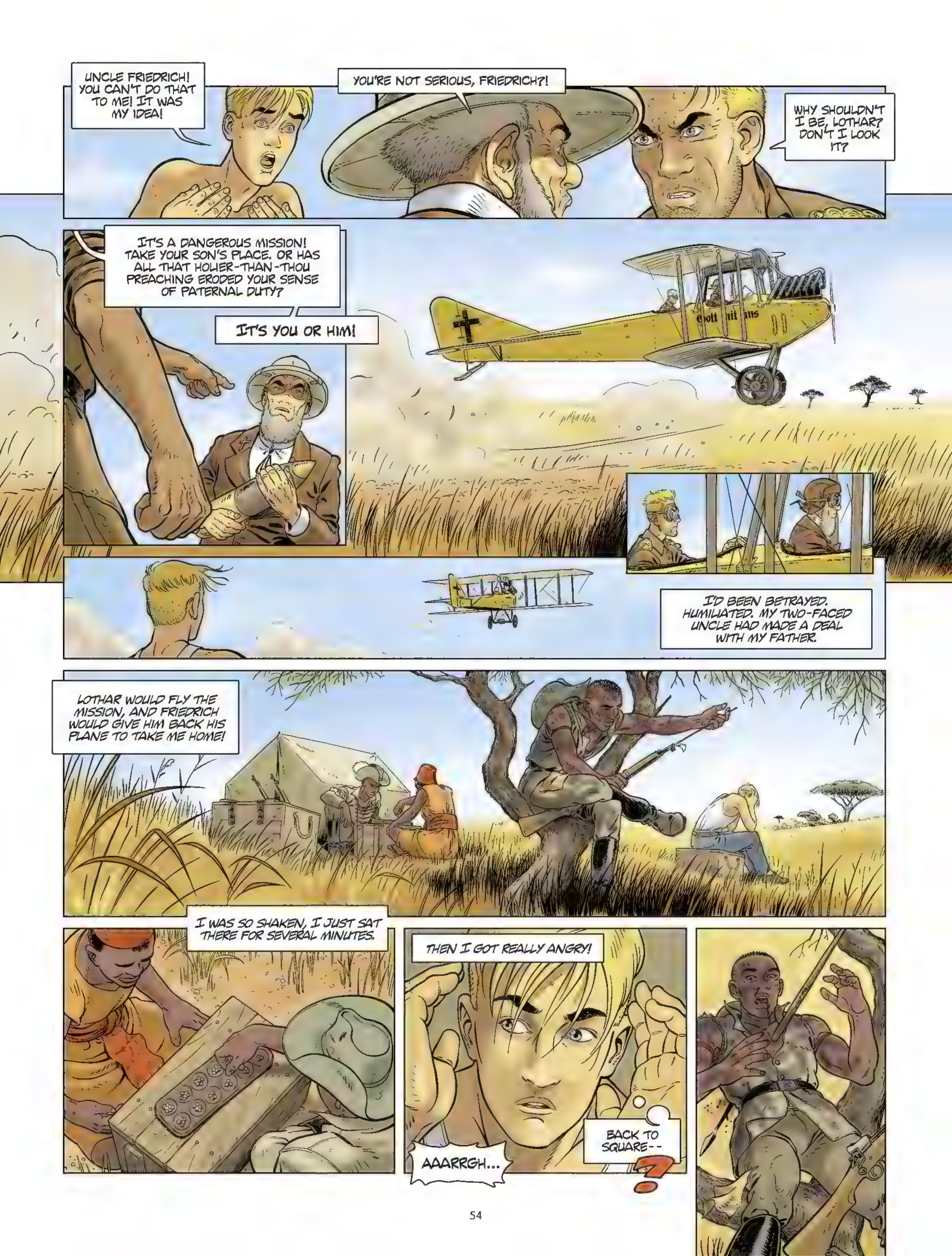

WE HAD TO JOIN PIECES TOGETHER, AND THE VILLAGERS PROVED ENORMOUSLY HELPFUL. SURPRISED BY THEIR INGENUITY, UNCLE FRIEDRICH REVISED HIS OPINION OF THESE "STURDY BUSHMEN."

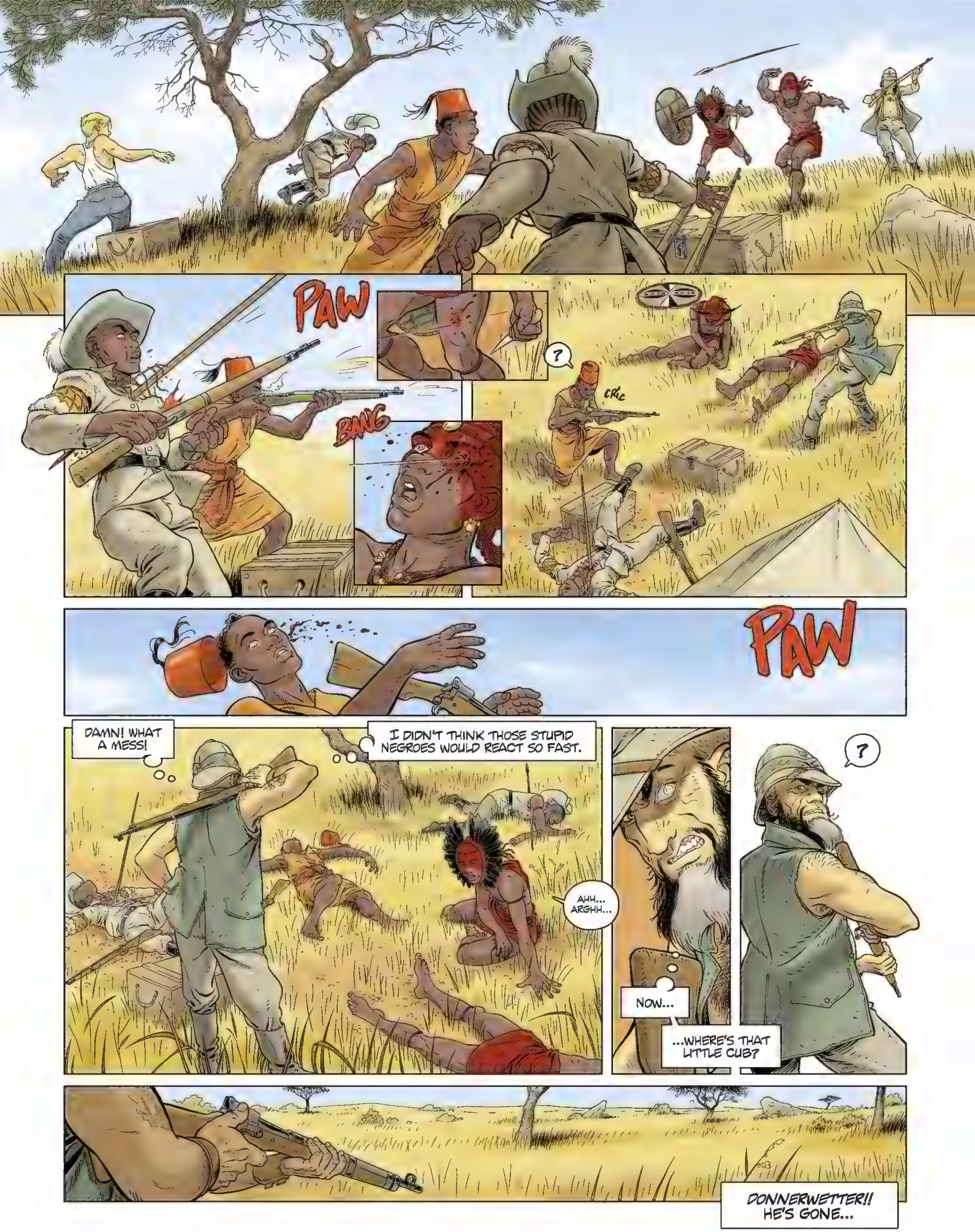



WITH THE WING STRUCTURE REBUILT, ALL THAT REMAINED WAS TO CUT SOME TENT MATERIAL INTO STRIPS AND STRETCH THEM OVER IT. BUT FIRST, WE HAD TO RETURN TO THE VILLAGE.
EZOKE HAD DONE IT.
WILL IT HOLD?
IT HAD BETTER, UNCLE! BUT WE'LL TRY IT OUT ON THE GROUND BEFORE WE TAKE OFF.
WITH THE VILLAGERS' HELP, OUR TWO ASKARIS HAD CLEARED ENOUGH GROUND TO MAKE A DECENT RUNWAY.

TO REWARD THEM FOR THEIR LABOR, FRIEDRICH GAVE THE HEAD OF THE VILLAGE A RIFLE AND A BOX OF CARTRIDGES.


SIX DAYS AFTER WE'D STARTED THE REPAIRS, THE ALBATROS WAS READY TO FLY AGAIN.
GREAT!
THE NEW WHEEL GAVE US A BUMPY RIDE, BUT WE'D BE ABLE TO TAKE OFF. EZOKE HAD DONE A GOOD JOB!
BRING ME SOME MORE PIECES OF CLOTH, EYANGA. THE SHELLS MUSTN'T BE ALLOWED TO MOVE...
OR ELSE--
DO YOU MIND TELLING ME WHAT YOU'RE DOING WITH MY PLANE?
LOTHAR?
?
FATHER?
H... HOW ON EARTH DID YOU FIND US?
NEVER MIND HOW! THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT I FOUND YOU IN TIME TO PREVENT THIS OUTRAGE. THE "GOD BE WITH US" MUSTN'T BE CARRYING WEAPONS OF WAR!
AND MY SON CERTAINLY SHOULDN'T BE IN CHARGE OF HER! HE'S TOO YOUNG TO KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING!
THIS IS WAR, LOTHAR, AND I TOLD YOU I'D REQUISITION YOUR PLANE IF I FOUND SOMEONE TO FLY IT.
WHATEVER IT IS YOU'RE UP TO, FRIEDRICH, I'M TOTALLY AGAINST IT!
HOWEVER, I AGREE WITH YOU ABOUT ONE THING: JOSEF IS TOO YOUNG TO TAKE SUCH A RISK...
...SO I'LL ASK YOU TO TAKE HIS PLACE!


UNCLE FRIEDRICH! YOU CAN'T DO THAT TO ME! IT WAS MY IDEA!
YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS, FRIEDRICH?!
WHY SHOULDN'T I BE, LOTHAR? DON'T I LOOK IT?
IT'S A DANGEROUS MISSION! TAKE YOUR SON'S PLACE. OR HAS ALL THAT HOWER-THAN-THOU PREACHING ERODED YOUR SENSE OF PATERNAL DUTY?
IT'S YOU OR HIM!
I'D BEEN BETRAYED. HUMILIATED. MY TWO-FACED UNCLE HAD MADE A DEAL WITH MY FATHER.
LOTHAR WOULD FLY THE MISSION, AND FRIEDRICH WOULD GIVE HIM BACK HIS PLANE TO TAKE ME HOME!
I WAS SO SHAKEN, I JUST SAT THERE FOR SEVERAL MINUTES.
THEN I GOT REALLY ANGRY!
AAARRGH...
BACK TO SQUARE--


PAW
BANG
?
CRAC
PAW
DAMN! WHAT A MESS!
I DIDN'T THINK THOSE STUPID NEGROES WOULD REACT SO FAST.
AHH... ARGHH...
NOW...
...WHERE'S THAT LITTLE CUB?
?
DONNERWETTER!! HE'S GONE...

THE STATION'S NORTH OF THE TOWN.

DO A LOW PASS FIRST, LOTHAR, SO WE CAN SEE EXACTLY WHERE TO DROP THE SHELLS.

WON'T THEY SHOOT AT US?!

NAH! THIS ISN'T A WARPLANE, AND IT'S NOT IN LUFTSTREITKRÄFTE COLORS.

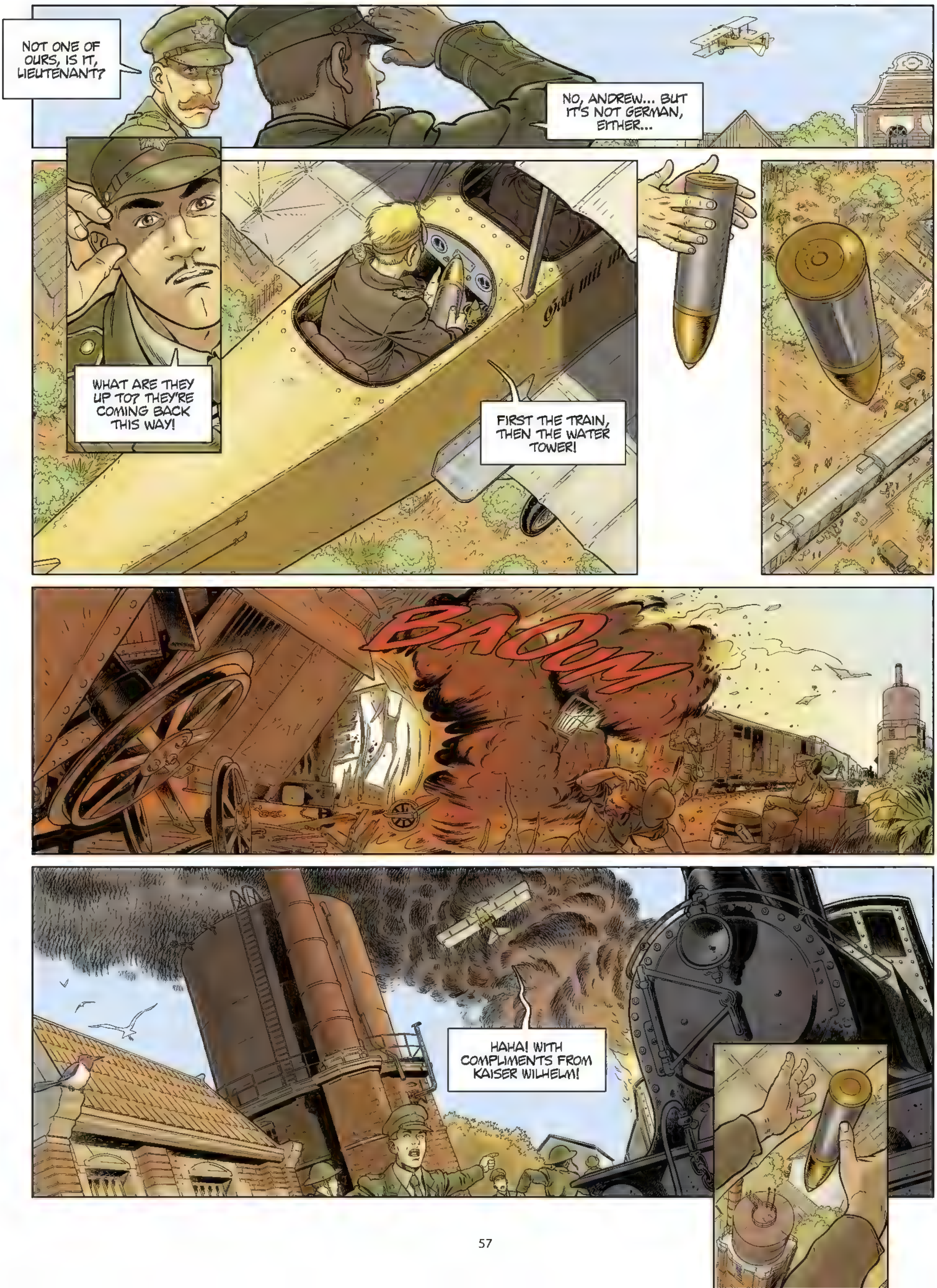
HI THERE, FRIENDS!

WE HAVE A LITTLE SURPRISE FOR YOU!

?

?

WHERE THE DEVIL DID THAT THING COME FROM?

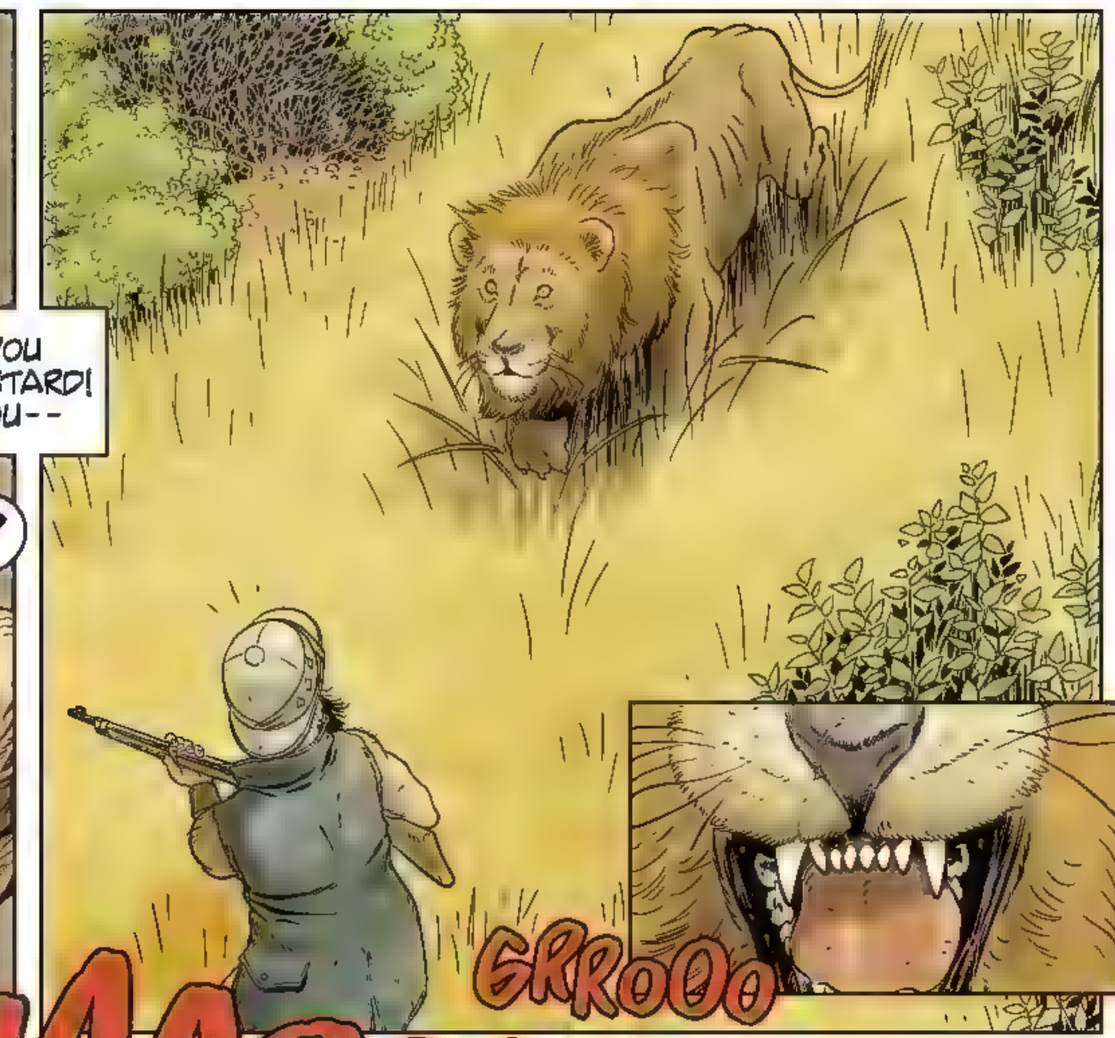

NOT ONE OF OURS, IS IT, LIEUTENANT?
NO, ANDREW... BUT IT'S NOT GERMAN, EITHER...
WHAT ARE THEY UP TO? THEY'RE COMING BACK THIS WAY!
FIRST THE TRAIN, THEN THE WATER TOWER!
BAOUM
HAHA! WITH COMPLIMENTS FROM KAISER WILHELM!

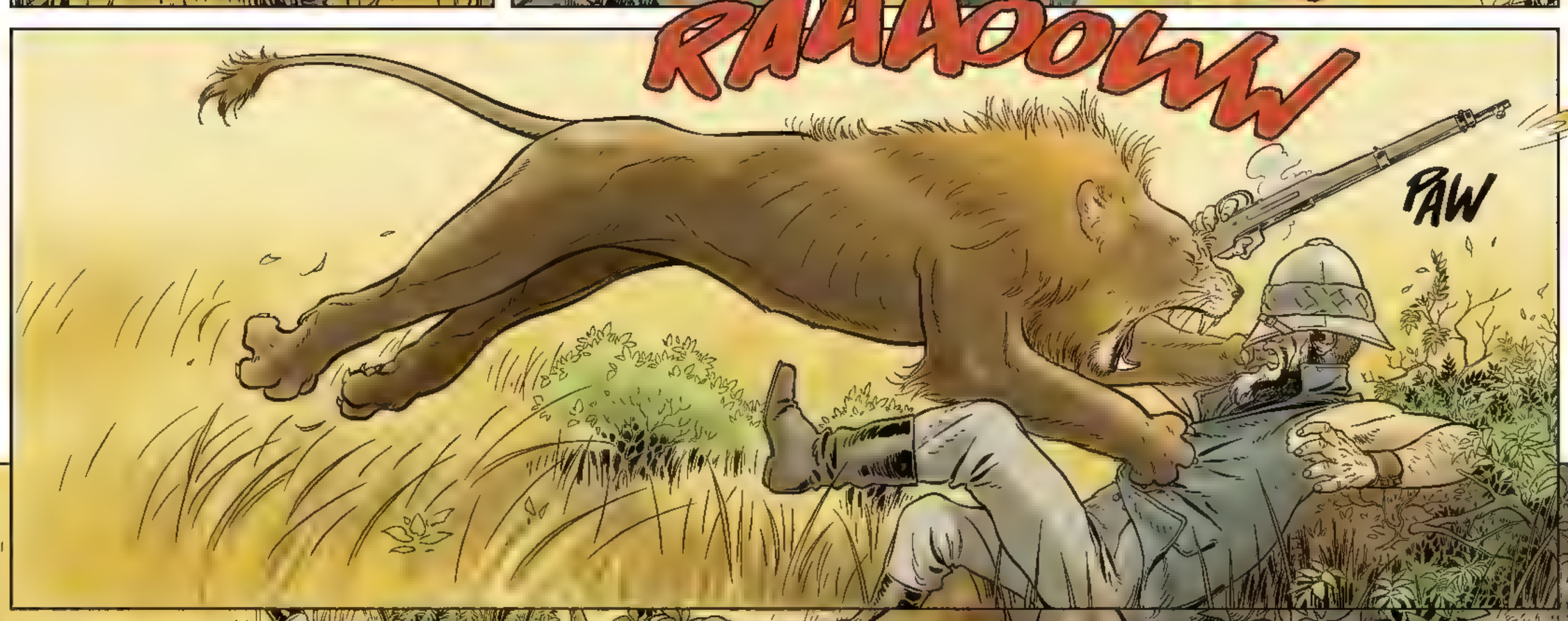
BROOM
MAKE A PASS OVER THOSE BRICK BUILDINGS THERE!
GOD FORGIVE ME!
HANSEN HAD VERY QUICKLY PICKED UP MY TRAIL. HE'D BEEN TRACKING ME FOR ALMOST HALF AN HOUR...
...BUT CAUTIOUSLY. HE DIDN'T KNOW IF I WAS ARMED!
ALL I COULD DO WAS WATCH IN TERROR AS A MAN WHO WANTED TO KILL ME GRADUALLY CAME CLOSER AND CLOSER.
MY STRATEGY NOW SEEMED TOTALLY RIDICULOUS...
...TO LET HANSEN PASS BY ME, AND THEN GO BACK TO THE CAMP TO GET A RIFLE.
HOW IDIOTIC! I WAS ON THE VERGE OF PANIC...

WHERE ARE YOU, SCUM?
C'MON OUT, YOU RAT! YOU CAN'T ESCAPE ME!

I'LL KILL YOU FOR WHAT YOU DID.

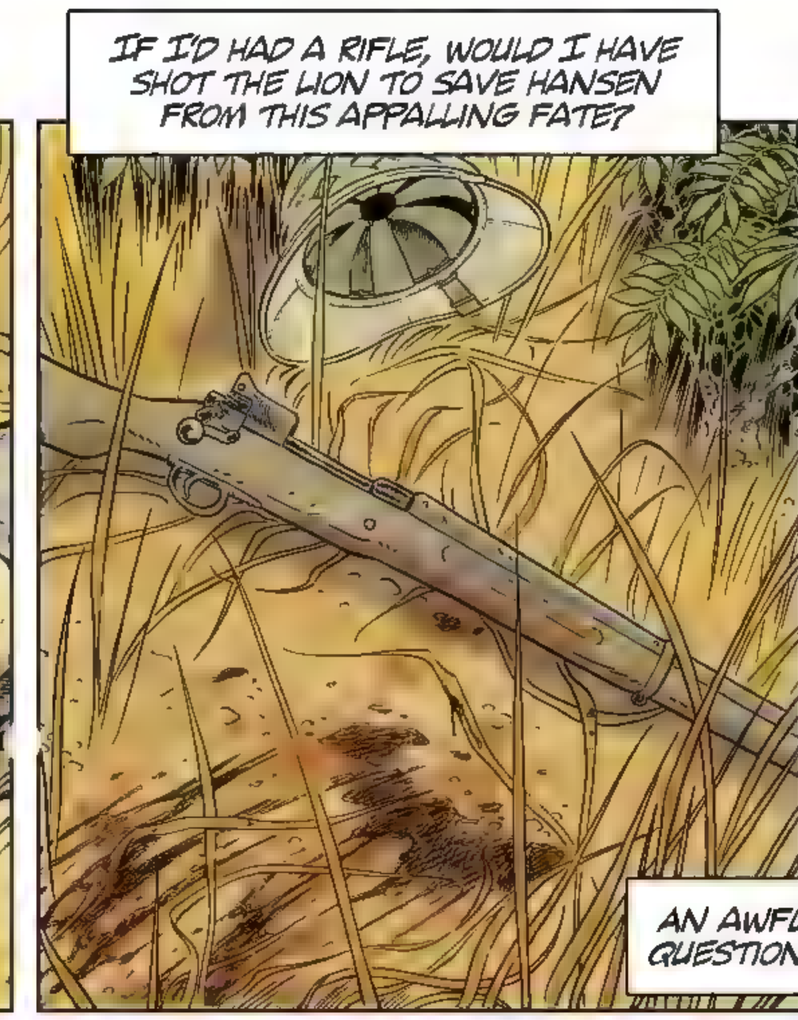
YOU BASTARD! YOU--
?

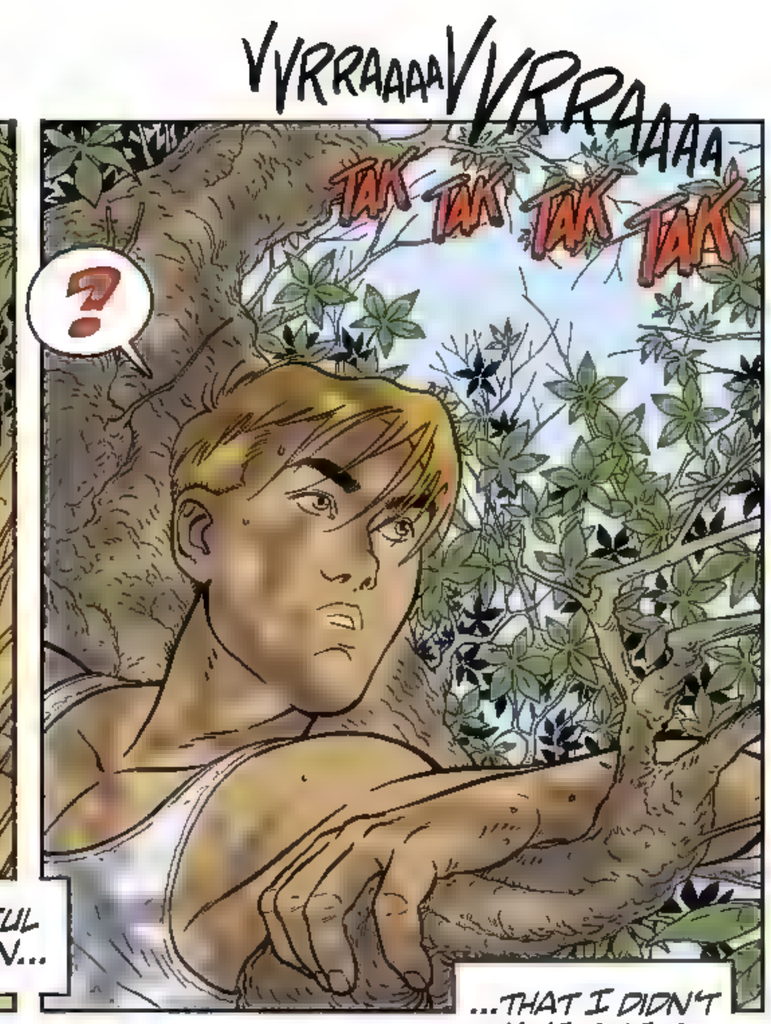

GRROOO


RAAAOOLLW
PAW

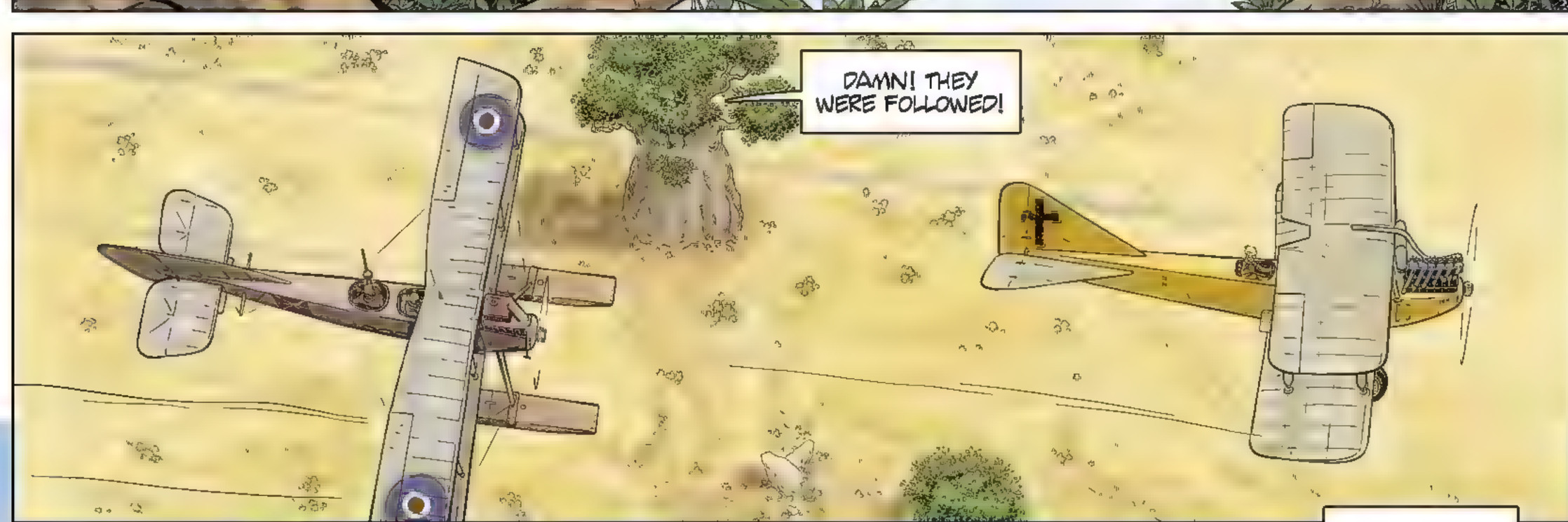
RAAOOO
AAARRGG!!
AT ONCE HORRIFIED AND FASCINATED BY THE GHASTLY SPECTACLE I WAS WITNESSING JUST A FEW FEET BELOW ME, I COULDN'T TEAR MY EYES AWAY FROM IT.

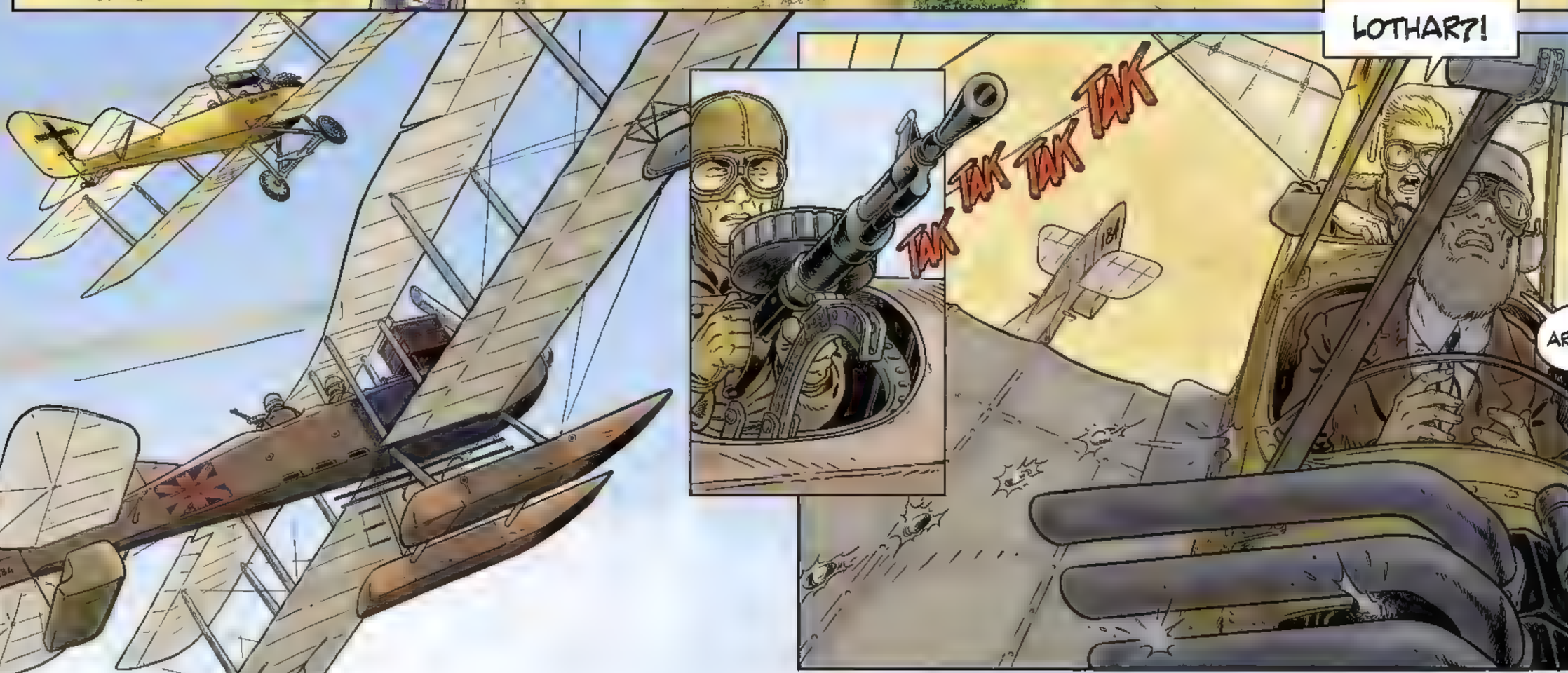
ABOVE ALL, IT MADE ME REALIZE THAT I FELT NO PITY FOR THE MAN WHO'D MURDERED SILKE.

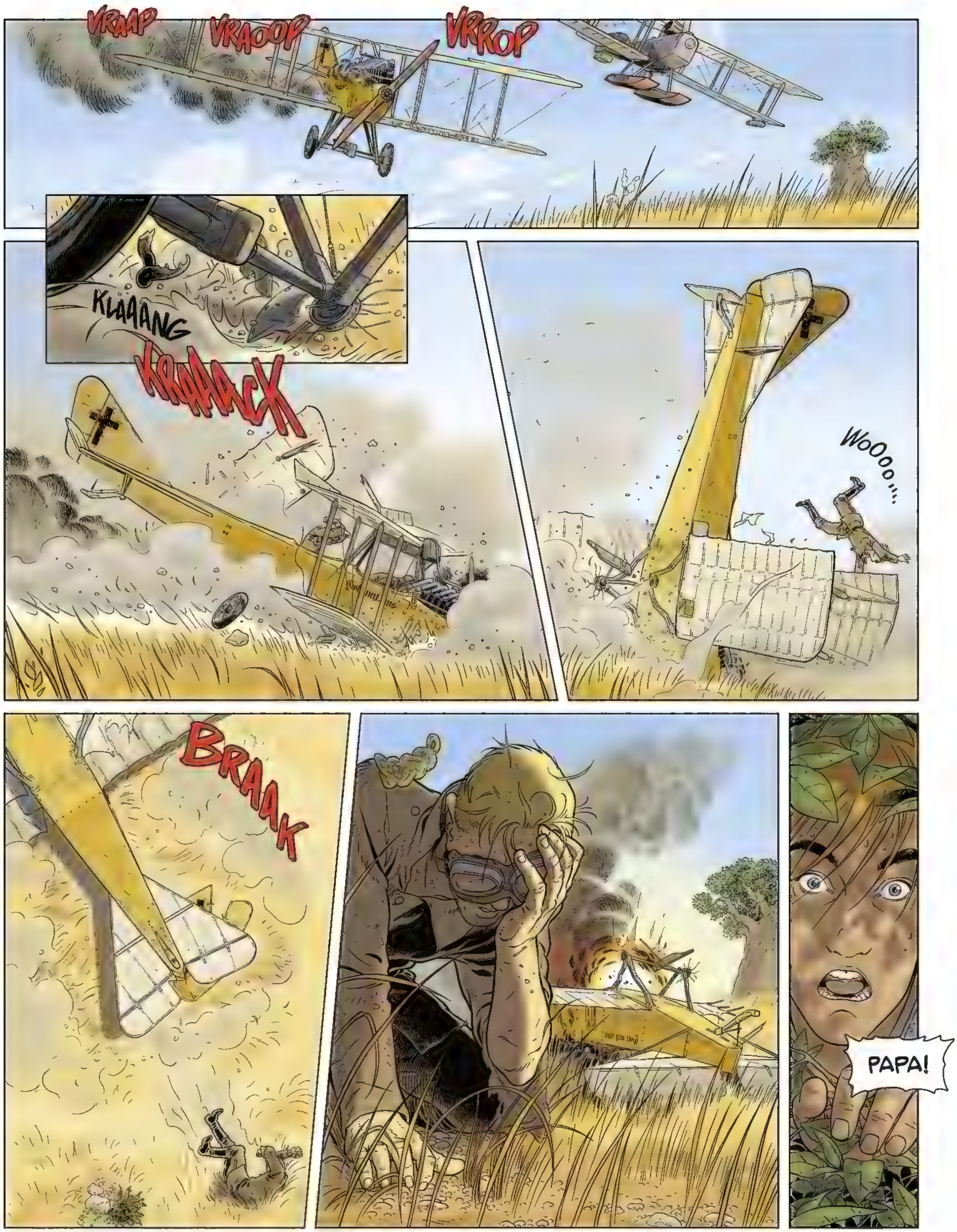

IF I'D HAD A RIFLE, WOULD I HAVE SHOT THE LION TO SAVE HANSEN FROM THIS APPALLING FATE?
AN AWFUL QUESTION...

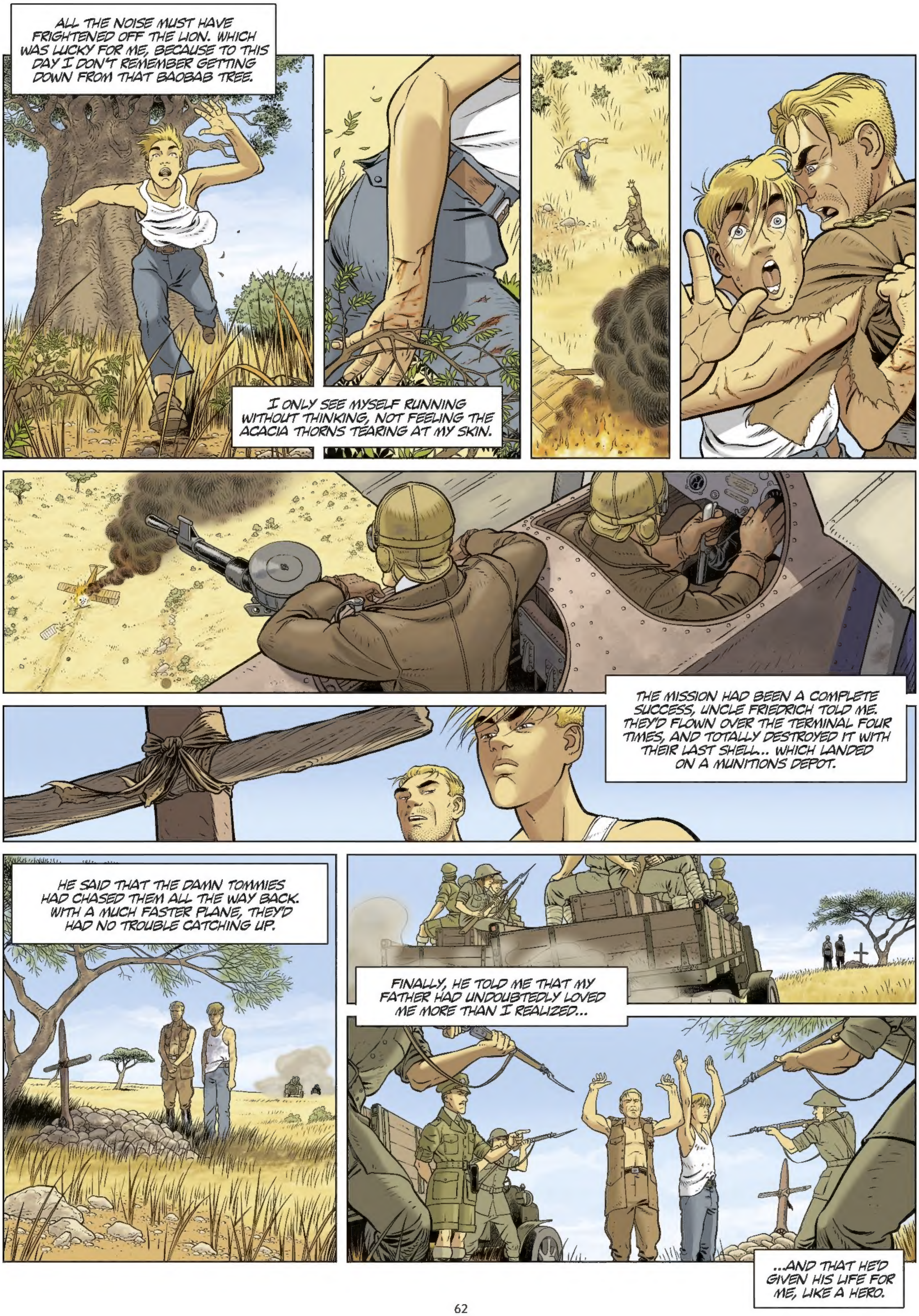

VVRRAAAA VVRRAAAA
TAK TAK TAK TAK
?
...THAT I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO ANSWER!

THE ALBATROS?


DAMN! THEY WERE FOLLOWED!


LOTHAR?!
TAK TAK TAK
TAK
ARGH...


VRAAP
VRAOOP
VRROP
KLAAANG
KRAAACK
WoOo...
BRAAK
PAPA!


ALL THE NOISE MUST HAVE FRIGHTENED OFF THE LION. WHICH WAS LUCKY FOR ME, BECAUSE TO THIS DAY I DON'T REMEMBER GETTING DOWN FROM THAT BAOBAB TREE.
I ONLY SEE MYSELF RUNNING WITHOUT THINKING, NOT FEELING THE ACACIA THORNS TEARING AT MY SKIN.
THE MISSION HAD BEEN A COMPLETE SUCCESS, UNCLE FRIEDRICH TOLD ME. THEY'D FLOWN OVER THE TERMINAL FOUR TIMES, AND TOTALLY DESTROYED IT WITH THEIR LAST SHELL... WHICH LANDED ON A MUNITIONS DEPOT.
HE SAID THAT THE DAMN TOMMIES HAD CHASED THEM ALL THE WAY BACK. WITH A MUCH FASTER PLANE, THEY'D HAD NO TROUBLE CATCHING UP.
FINALLY, HE TOLD ME THAT MY FATHER HAD UNDOUBTEDLY LOVED ME MORE THAN I REALIZED...
...AND THAT HE'D GIVEN HIS LIFE FOR ME, LIKE A HERO.

My uncle and I ended up in a prison camp, where Captain Neumann joined us three weeks later, with his surviving officers...

He surrendered on October 2, 1917, as he fled toward Lake Victoria. His unfortunate Askaris were forced to join the Belgian forces. The opinions of Africans counted for little at the time.

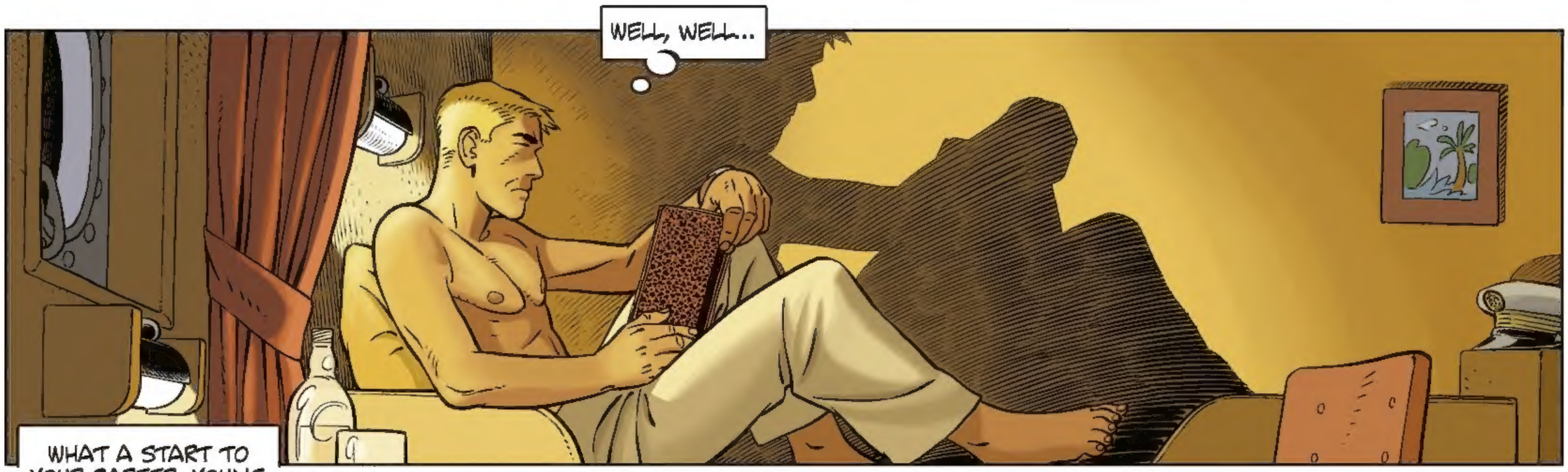
I didn't see my mother again until the end of the war in German East Africa, two weeks after the armistice was signed in Europe.

On November 25, 1918, von Lettow-Vorbeck, who had taken refuge in Mozambique with his undefeated army, laid down weapons.

It was mission accomplished for a man who would receive a hero's welcome in Berlin in March 1919—with only 20,000 soldiers and 45,000 porters, he'd held off the 400,000 soldiers and 600,000 porters of the "Triple Entente" of Britain, Belgium, and Portugal for four years.

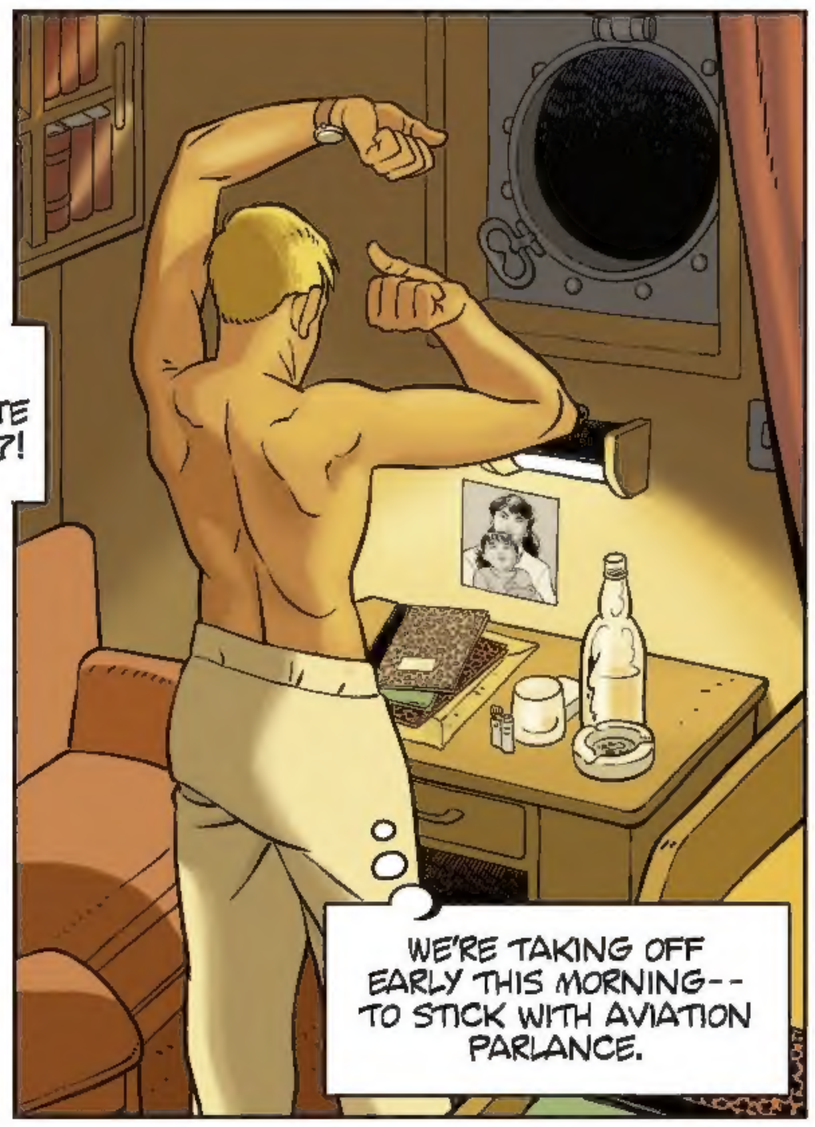
On June 28, 1919, the Treaty of Versailles brought an official end to the German colonial empire, with Britain and Belgium dividing German East Africa between them. My mother, Constance Montval, who had lost her husband, decided to return to her family in France.

As for me, the first chapter of my life as a pilot was over... and the second was about to begin.


WELL, WELL...

WHAT A START TO YOUR CAREER, YOUNG JOSEF... A.K.A. TANGUY!
EVEN BETTER THAN MINE!

WHOA, THAT LATE ALREADY?!


WE'RE TAKING OFF EARLY THIS MORNING-- TO STICK WITH AVIATION PARLANCE.

YANN MISSED ROSANNA AND INÈS TERRIBLY NOW. AND THE CLOSER IT GOT TO THE DAY HE WAS DUE TO SEE THEM AGAIN, THE MORE HE YEARNED TO HOLD THEM IN HIS ARMS.

TANGUY WAS RIGHT ABOUT THE REAL MEANING OF LIFE...
END

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